

REVERSIBLE DESTINY

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NOT TO
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ARAKAWA / GINS

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Above all, what is missing from the world is a sense of what is in operation as the world. Even so, it can be stated without hesitation that each of us is involved (or ought to be involved) in an ongoing process of self-invention. If each person must invent herself further out of what she has at her disposal, we should at least have readily available a reference guide to all that a person can possibly rally to the cause of being a person. When I assign a meaning to something, I do it on the basis of what? In this, as in all instances, the questioner herself is the big question, the greater context. Being a person is an astounding event or series of events. Astounding in its variegated ordinariness. Does variegated ordinariness exist only always to dwindle away toward a dreary end? Why should the astounding series of events that is a person have to come to an end? But in regard to a whole person, what constitutes the whole of it? The body-person cannot be studied apart from her surroundings. What wields itself as the architectural body? To what extent do architectural surrounds guide behavior? Can architectural inflection of thought and feeling be calibrated precisely?

REVERSIBLE DESTINY

ARAKAWA/GINS

G U G G E N H E I M M U S E U M

REVERSIBLE DESTINY — ARAKAWA/GINS

ORGANIZED BY MICHAEL GOVAN

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO

JUNE 25–AUGUST 31, 1997S

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Foreword

The Guggenheim Museum is honored to present *Reversible Destiny – Arakawa/Gins*, the first major museum exhibition in the United States devoted to the work of Arakawa and Madeline Gins. Focusing on a career committed to challenging the fundamental premises and philosophical implications of perception and space, the exhibition features Arakawa and Gins's earliest collaboration, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, 1963–73, 1996, and their recent groundbreaking reversible destiny architecture, 1971–present.

This exhibition and the accompanying comprehensive volume provide the ideal opportunity to reflect on the artists' formative principles while experiencing the possibilities of their new science. Arakawa and Gins's *The Mechanism of Meaning* (exhibited here in its entirety for the first time in the United States) and their reversible destiny architecture demonstrate a breadth of mediums and engage in a multidisciplinary discourse from such diverse sources as biology and poetry. As we head toward the twenty-first century with reversible destiny sites being developed worldwide, it is a particularly appropriate time to celebrate the visionary artistic collaboration that defines Arakawa and Gins.

Michael Govan, former Deputy Director of the Guggenheim Museum, and currently Director, Dia Center for the Arts, merits special recognition for his longstanding commitment to the artists' work. His organization of this exhibition has been handled with clarity and elegance.

An important group of organizations deserves acknowledgment for providing the resources to realize such a significant project. They are Funding Group A/G, Toyota, and Shiseido. Special thanks is given to Gallery Takagi for its assistance in working with these sponsors. We also thank the Japan Foundation for its support in producing the catalogue.

We are pleased to present *Reversible Destiny–Arakawa/Gins* in the Deutsche Telekom Galleries of the Guggenheim Museum SoHo. Deutsche Telekom is a proud sponsor of the Guggenheim Museum SoHo and the Deutsche Telekom Galleries. This exhibition continues Deutsche Telekom's support for the art and technology of this century and the next.

THOMAS KRENS
DIRECTOR

Acknowledgments

A central tenet of the work of Madeline Gins and Arakawa is collaboration, both between themselves as artists and with others inside and outside their immediate surroundings—whether it is with other artists, poets, scientists, or philosophers. Arakawa and Gins see their own work within a larger field—the exchange of ideas. It has been a special privilege to work with them to create this exhibition and catalogue, and both artists join me in thanking our collaborators.

I thank Thomas Krens, Director, for his longstanding interest in Arakawa and Gins's oeuvre as well as for his support of this exhibition. His enthusiasm has been shared by Lisa Dennison, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, and Judith Cox, Deputy Director and General Counsel.

For the effort of coordinating the exhibition and catalogue, I thank Christina Yang, Project Assistant Curator, who intelligently and diligently saw the project through all its details, and Max Hollein, Executive Assistant to the Director, who energetically helped launch this initiative and compiled the bibliography and exhibition history.

This book, the first major overview of Arakawa and Gins's projects in English, is an event itself, which was made possible in large part through the impressive and patient leadership of Anthony Calnek, Director of Publications, as well as the exacting work with text and image of Edward Weisberger, Editor. For the enormous technical and creative challenge of the book's design, including significant editorial contributions, thanks are due to Melody Sumner Carnahan and Michael Sumner of Burning Books, who have collaborated with the artists in the past and came to understand the material in depth.

The publication was assisted also by Domenick Ammirati, Editorial Assistant; Jennifer Knox White, Associate Editor; Susan Lee, Assistant Designer; Elizabeth Levy, Managing Editor; Melissa Secondino, Production Assistant; and Keith Mayerson. For their exemplary research assistance under deadline pressure, my sincere gratitude also goes to Robin Clark, Collections Curatorial Assistant; Susan Cross, Curatorial Assistant; and Vivien Greene, Curatorial Assistant. Special thanks are also due to Christa Haxthausen, Research Assistant, who shaped the project's research effort at its critical early stage.

The catalogue presents important analysis and historical perspective on Arakawa and Gins's work, extending from its early investigation into

phenomenology to its current research on architecture and city planning. For the intellectual rigor and poetic illumination of their contributions, my sincerest gratitude goes to the catalogue authors: Jean-François Lyotard; Charles W. Haxthausen, Professor of Art and Director of the Graduate Program in the History of Art, Williams College; F. L. Rush, Department of Philosophy, Columbia University; George Lakoff, Professor of Cognitive Science, University of California, Berkeley; Mark C. Taylor, Director of the Center for Technology in the Arts and Humanities, Williams College, and Director of the Peter B. Lewis Critical Issues Forum, Guggenheim Museum; Andrew Benjamin, Professor of Philosophy, University of Warwick; Radovan Ivsic and Annie Le Brun; Bernhard Waldenfels, Professor of Philosophy, Ruhr Universitat, Bochum; and architects and architectural critics Ed Keller, Johannes Knesl, Greg Lynn, and Jesse Reiser.

For her steady monitoring of the project's finances, thanks go to Ruth Taylor, Director of Budgeting and Planning. I am also grateful to Nicole Hepburn, Exhibition Administration Coordinator.

For their professional skill and dedication to the arts of conservation, exhibition design, registration, and installation, I thank Jocelyn Groom, Exhibition Design Coordinator; Mary Ann Hoag and Dan Gillespie, Lighting Designers; Barry Hylton, Exhibition Technician; Gillian McMillan, Senior Conservator; Peter Read, Production Services Manager/Exhibition Design Coordinator; Christopher Skura, Museum Technician; Hubbard Toombs, Assistant Registrar; Dennis Vermeulen, Senior Exhibition Technician; and Scott Wixon, Manager of Art Services and Preparation.

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MICHAEL GOVAN

ISLE OF REVERSIBLE DESTINY -- LA CERTOSA, VENICE



If only one were not obliged to disappear in the end. If only one could practice how not to vanish forever. Articulated terrains and low, rammed-earth walls cut across each other to form three hundred and sixty-five gardens which, individually, and in groups, or in sequences, provide practice of this kind--a training ground for the architectural body.

Introduction

The collaborative work of Arakawa and Madeline Gins already has a place in art history. *The Mechanism of Meaning*, the multipanel cycle begun in 1963, completed in large part by 1973, and augmented with two new panels for this exhibition, is a touchstone of conceptual art. Marcel Duchamp said that through his own work he wanted to “put art back at the service of the mind.” Arakawa, a friend of Duchamp, wanted art to question the very nature of the mind that contemplates it.

An open-ended project begun when Arakawa and Gins first met in New York, *The Mechanism of Meaning* stands as a huge compendium of human capability. In the course of its elaborate analysis of meaning, this cycle of eighty-three mixed-media panels—divided into sixteen subdivisions, such as 1. *Neutralization of Subjectivity* and 7. *Splitting of Meaning*—addresses a range of philosophical issues centered around the nature of perception and, in particular, the inseparable connection between body and mind in the process of all human understanding.

Incorporating stenciled letters, diagrams, drawings, and other collage elements, the eighty-three panels offer a series of interactive exercises and thought experiments, intended, more often than not, to serve up nonsense when successfully executed. Through each exercise, viewers actively participate in the formation of meaning from a particular and specified perspective. They observe a slippage from meaning (or near-meaning) to nonsense, and sift through and recombine elements and events in the process of construing meaning.

As a systematic catalogue of the ways in which meaning emerges in processes of perception, *The Mechanism of Meaning* presents itself as a model of human consciousness. The work in total suggests that the nature of meaning is embedded not in any compendium of knowledge, but in each person’s active engagement with the world. Meaning is not arbitrary, but it is individual. The artists refer to each viewer, each person, as a “mechanism of meaning.”

The Mechanism of Meaning extends a tradition of intellectual and artistic expression through visual and verbal paradox. It can be related to Paul Klee’s whimsical diagrams or the puns and puzzles of René Magritte’s paintings, and certainly to Duchamp. As a research project, the work was not an end in itself, but provided the basis for Arakawa and Gins’s further work off the canvas: the project of “reversible destiny.”

In the short history of avant-garde art, no challenge and provocation by artists to viewers is so ambitious as Arakawa and Gins’s “learn how not to die.” Reversible destiny challenges the definition of art itself, eschewing aesthetics for something that might be called “practice”—the practical implementation of philosophical ideas, and practice for living. Reversible destiny, embodied in drawings, models, and outdoor parks and buildings, such as the recently completed *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, 1993–95, in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, looks something like architecture, if not art, but rejects architecture’s aesthetics as well as its traditional function.

Too practical to be art, too confounding to be architecture, as we know them, reversible destiny, like *The Mechanism of Meaning*, is presented as exercises that blur any distinction between mind and body. In the park and buildings of the *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, we are asked to walk along steep and changing inclines and to make sense of nonsensical discrepancies in scale and arrangement of familiar objects and images—without benefit of a fixed horizon to keep our bearings. We walk across maps that combine known streets of different cities. The map of Japan is a roof; then, we see it repeated endlessly in different scales in varying incarnations as ground, object, or map. We walk in a depression that appears again in its positive form in front of us as a hill, and yet again perched as a free-floating mound on top of a wall that blocks any other view of the horizon. There is a building, but its roof is also the ground, and its walls seem not to divide interior from exterior. Outside the building, sit kitchen appliances (which are also inside); inside, a wall divides a table in two with its chairs repeated upside down on the ceiling. There are three tubs in one of many bathrooms: one disrupted by a wall, one beneath our feet, and one on the ceiling. It might take several hours to go from one room to another, experiencing everything as a subtle and different comparison to something we have already seen. In Arakawa and Gins’s *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, with every physical and mental effort spent avoiding injury in the midst of maintaining a continually changing and elusive balance, there is no possibility for moments like the passive interpretation or reflection that takes place in the face of a traditional painting or work of architecture.

A starting point in Western art and architectural history for approaching Arakawa and Gins’s reversible destiny might be the work of Vladimir

Tatlin and El Lissitzky, whose hybrid art and architecture was intended to put revolutionary political and social theory into practice in everyday life. Or, perhaps more historically, one might refer to the tilting floors and walls of the famous leaning house in the park of Gianfrancesco Vicino Orsini's sixteenth-century castle in Bomarzo, Italy (as Radovan Ivisic and Annie Le Brun do so beautifully in their essay in this book). Yet, Tatlin's and Lissitzky's architecture works through a combination of symbolic form and social function; they did not prepare us for the intended disorientation, lack of discernible propaganda, and confounding of function inherent in Arakawa and Gins's projects. And the leaning house at Bomarzo—poetic, disorienting, and compelling, particularly in light of Arakawa and Gins's recent work—is an eccentric architectural folly intended to amuse rather than to challenge the fundamental environs and practice of everyday life.

As documented in this book and exhibition, the artists have come to the creation of their *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, as well as the more sculptural projects that preceded it and plans for new buildings, parks, and cities that have followed it, with a philosophical/scientific treatise of research on mind, body, perception, space and time, and ethics. The invention and explication of the terms “landing site,” “ubiquitous site,” “architectural body,” and “reversible destiny,” among others, in Arakawa and Gins's work and writings embody an entire philosophy of being in theory and practice.

Impossible to adumbrate in the space of an introduction, or even this book, the terms of Arakawa and Gins's philosophical and practical challenge—embodied in “learn how not to die” and reversible destiny—deal with the fundamental nature of the relationship between us and the thing we call the world around us. Specifically, the artists have set out to demonstrate that the greatest part of our experience, and therefore the course of our destiny, is lost to a habitual and deadening lack of understanding of our experience in the world.

The artists illustrate how we make and become part of our world through our perception, much of it preconscious (that is, before the certainty of our mental reflection, logic, and philosophy). When Arakawa and Gins's buildings and parks disrupt our balance and confound our expectations, they rob us of our habit but propose to give us new insight and practice in living. Of primary importance in living is to understand that the mind is not isolated from the body. The body thinks, forms conclusions about—and becomes connected to—its surroundings, and sets the terms of our understanding long before we can rationalize our experience in reflective thought. In the artists' example: when I stub my toe, it is because I do not have the proper set of *architectural landing sites* in place. That is, my *architectural body* has not assembled enough clues to connect itself properly to its surroundings. Sites of reversible destiny are designed to be as complex as our most innate mechanisms of our perception. It might take an hour to go from one room to another, and I might live there in a continual state of déjà vu as I experience a repetition of slightly differing perceptions. Yet, I will be involved in a constant cri-

tique of my own experience. I will see. I will live. Perhaps for the first time.

In philosophical terms, Arakawa and Gins dispute the fundamental principals of an intellectual tradition, beginning with Descartes, that has theoretically separated mind from body, and subject from object (that is, person from world perceived). Descartes, of course, helped launch the notion that being (our sense of being) was a function of our conscious mental processes: “I think therefore I am,” and therefore the world is inside my head. The corollary to his proclamation, perhaps best presented in a Hegelian world view, is that the subject (the thinking being) and the object (the world) are separated by an infinite chasm. We cannot know the object in itself, only as we represent it to ourselves, and therefore we as subjects are disconnected from our world. Oversimplified, those are the central terms of the debate that Arakawa and Gins confront. Through their work, they challenge the distinction between mind and body, subject and object, on two grounds primarily: First, our bodies as *architectural bodies* think as our minds (which becomes abundantly clear in our experience, for example, of *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*). Second, the world is not given but formed by us; a body lives in a reciprocal relation with its surroundings; landing sites put into question the subject/object distinction; and the effect of change (positive and negative) on the world by us—and our perceptions of it—are indisputable.

What is at stake in this philosophical and theoretical debate? Our lives, our destiny, the natural world around us. Reversible destiny houses and cities will not allow us to be complacent about a set of givens of our environment that we must realize are not given but formed by our perceptions. It is our habit that becomes the given, which becomes the assumptions and practice and then morals that form our destiny and lead to our not living—lead to the death of our perception that is the foundation of our existence, lead to the assumptions that bring terror and the tragic threat to human existence witnessed with the Holocaust or Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or that bring the threat to the survival of the ecological whole of person and world. As the artists Arakawa and Gins suggest, “death might not be inevitable.” Thus, they offer their challenge: “learn how not to die.”

MICHAEL GOVAN

Dear Neverending Architectonic Reflective Wherewithal,

Dear Friends,

Could one perhaps call your antidestiny architecture “antibiography”?

Would the distribution of time between beginning and end be neutralized?

Would the possibilities reserved for childhood remain open in every circumstance? Might they even multiply? Could the body be younger at sixty years of age than at fifteen?

The body would no longer inhabit a dwelling that grew old along with it. It would no longer be dedicated to adapting itself to constant volumes—a door here, a chair there, an ear here, a pair of knees there. Would its space begin anew each day?

Instantaneous habits would come and go. Affectionately, energetically. Would architecture summon energy and affection to inhabit the body?

Would it be futile to build concepts? Could one write or draw through encounters, straight from nothingness?

The three children playing hide-and-seek in this house as I ask you these questions reverse the destinies of the beds, the tables, the rooms, ignoring the assigned purposes of each. Laughter, shouts, silence, vehemence, foot-stamping, breathlessness—is this, in fact, similar to the task your architecture expects of us, dear Madeline, dear Arakawa?

JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD

JANUARY 1, 1997

Translated, from the French, by Stephen Sartarelli.

Dear Jean-François,

In response to the questions you frame in support of what we are attempting:

The oxymoron “reversible destiny” pits a theoretically unlimited plasticity against hoary inexorability. The point is to force flexibility upon invincible necessity. The term “antidestiny” is not a worthy substitute. Denying necessary links between events in favor of a chaos having its own inexorable givenness, antidestiny weighs in on the side of no change.

Reversible destiny calls neither for a negation nor for a barring-off, but for a pivot—a pivoting around in one’s tracks. Are these mortal tracks pivotable? So far, this species has been sentenced to death prior to having been able to ascertain who or what it is that must die. Why not invent ourselves into becoming another variety of being, one that will not relinquish its own elasticity and multivalency, one that will veer off from dire necessity?

Why not construct life to become what it can become without worrying about biography, pro or anti? On the other hand, how would a biography of spacetimeenergymatter strike you? It must be admitted that we, of this species, have, after all, not even come close to the point of knowing who or what needs a biography?

We are not concerned with reversing time but rather with adding a measure of reversibility to the mortal condition by squaring off against it. If one speaks of a neutralizing of the distribution of time between beginning and end, referring, of course, always to bodily time or duration of bodily movement, one is obliged to note all manner of neutralizations. Perhaps no one yet knows all that needs to be addressed in this regard?

Can you accept the following definition of “growing young”: becoming increasingly able to field an ever greater number of possibilities? Could you release the notion of “young” altogether in favor of an open-ended nondisintegrating? Could not the concept of an adult-infant find favor with you? The adult-infant is as infant as adult.

There are reversible destiny houses, such as the *Amorphous Interpenetration House* and the *Infancy House—Light Chaos*, in which the body would, even more than ordinarily is the case, be “dedicated to adapting itself to constant volumes,” but yes, in still others, within the

Ubiquitous Site House in particular, there would be no constant volumes with which to comply. In any event, space which, as we define it, exists only by virtue of the actions the body takes, or the series of configurations of landing sites delineating the body and its maneuvers within an architectural surround, would do nothing but recommence within both types of reversible destiny houses, and within any ordinary dwelling for that matter.

At last no longer generalized out of existence by (the term) space, the landings constitutive of landing sites can be noticed in the variety of ways they occur, which include for a start: Upward landing. Lateral landing. Hesitant landing. Embracing landing. Penumbral landing. Ricocheting landing.

Every bodily motion within an architectural surround elicits a particular constellation of configurations. Changing one or two aspects of an architectural surround—pitch of terrain or general orientation—has the effect of drastically altering a few of a constellation's configurations while leaving the majority of them in place. The differences that become apparent as one moves from one architectural surround to another form as bodily concepts, that is, conceiving happens, more noticeably than ever, through and across the entire body.

Concepts generally form bodily, of course, but hardly in so evident a manner. Could this be because the full extent of the body's scope eludes us still? If the body is born into architecture and is from then on inextricable from it, why not take it up in its full scope as an "architectural body" (the body proper plus the architectural surround)? Within an architectural body having some cognizance of itself as an architectural body, might not that which is formative of the ability to construct concepts in the first place surface as revealed?

What will it be like to live in a world in which instead of conceptions being a dime a dozen, they are a dime for every hundred dozen or more? If the basic unit of concern is the body, not an abstract body considered apart from impulses and movement, but the body in action, then will not the concepts most central to the living of a life be those formed—no matter how fleetingly—through architectural encounters?

Landing sites are tokens of types. Configurations of landing sites have a certain uniformity and repeatability. Each sensory mode disperses as a particular configuration at each instant. It is all quite complex because landing sites abound within landing sites. In any case, configurations are additive, forming constellations.

Are we not ready to tell the pesky, old-guard concepts (for example, "mind," "space") to go fly a kite? Must we not become more adept at pinpointing concepts on the fly? In the midst of action, allow a brief noticing of the atmospheric muscle or muscle tone (the airy sinews of an architectural body), or a look to architectural palpation, a palpating to check the condition not only of the body but of the architectural surround? Might not then a *déjà palpé* come to exist as both an embellishment on the *déjà vu* and a means of explicating it? How much of what the architectural body has to say results from what articulated terrain asks of it?

What if an architectural body could (communally) self-administer appropriate daily doses of both order and chaos?

In these poor times, surfacing from childhood having gone through a first acculturation, and faced with an ever-to-be-suppressed impending terror, most people, no matter what games they have played, began their adult lives unaware of finalities. What if a series of acculturations could be prepared in advance for one as a sequence of architectural settings and surrounds?

Architecture is a tool that can be used as writing has been, except that it can have a far more extensive range of application. What if architectural form could hold open the acculturative process itself? Would it not be the ultimate common sense, or better, the Ur-intelligent act, for this species to assume responsibility for its own conceptual process? Might not an architecture incorporating articulatory accuracy—an accuracy that does not allow anything whatsoever that is in play to be overlooked—be a fine training ground for an ethical stance? Might not an architectural surround set up to cooperate with the gathering of intelligence increase, at the very least, ones feeling of connection with and sense of responsibility to the world? One should be no more wary of reflected-on and thought-through architecture that embodies premises and tentatives than of writing that does so. Perhaps it is dangerous, but in facing this danger, we can begin to insist on the species' architectural responsibility to itself.

Would it not be good, indeed, amazing, to be finally given a chance to choose whether or not to be mortal? Could it be merely that this mortal coil has so far never been either amply coiled up or fully enough uncoiled in a sufficiently comparative architectural manner?

"See that woman over there—she's not that mortal." How can this be made to become a statement of truth?

Yours out of the range of any conservative gesture whatsoever,

MADELINE GINS AND ARAKAWA

JANUARY 11, 1997

REVERSIBLE DESTINY

death, not the word
but the event, becomes obsolete

nondeath without end

denecessitates dying

dying becomes extinct

no more irretrievable disappearances

vintage nondying

ongoing regeneration

no destiny but a reversible one—
the pair as inseparable: reversibledestiny

its motto: death is old-fashioned



Body Proper + Architectural Surround = ARCHITECTURAL BODY



Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro, Gifu Prefecture, Japan, 1990–8

The Road to Critical Resemblances House

Report of a Mapping

CHARLES W. HAXTHAUSEN

*Negation says nothing, affirmation just as little.
The artistic begins with the word otherwise.*—Carl Einstein¹

A raised concrete rim painted with gigantic fragments of urban maps from Cairo, Peking, Bangkok, Moscow, Berlin, Paris, and New York enframes *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, 1993–95, designed by Arakawa and Madeline Gins, in Gifu Prefecture, Japan. The maps are so large, visitors can stroll down their “streets,” passing abruptly, for example, from Times Square into central Tokyo. These schematic icons of cityscapes, conjuring up images of familiar landmarks, of bustling squares and tree-lined avenues, border a landscape unlike any other—a landscape with strange, tilted, labyrinthine structures dotting its perfectly rounded cookie-cutter hills, with kitchen appliances and living room furniture incongruously dumped onto steep hillsides. Adorned with such place names as *Cleaving Hall*, *Exactitude Ridge*, *Critical Resemblances House*, and *Trajectory Membrane Gate*, featuring buildings whose walls pass through bathroom fixtures with chairs suspended from ceilings, this bizarre terrain emphatically resists attempts at negotiation by means of the familiar stock of perceptual patterns and categories out of which each of us constructs the world.²

Together, these terrains—the one a graphic representation of the familiar, the other, a palpable, traversable landscape that assaults our habits of perceiving—mark a trajectory in Arakawa’s work. Maps, floor plans, and diagrams—schematic two-dimensional icons of three-dimensional structures—figured prominently in Arakawa’s paintings from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Then, in the late 1980s, his paintings began to take on a three-dimensional element; although they remained literally as flat as before, he incorporated devices to engage the beholder in increasingly physical, tactile ways. It was roughly at this time that Arakawa, working with poet and philosopher Gins, redirected his energies to what the two artists have termed “reversible destiny architecture,” leaving painting behind.³ The move from two dimensions into three marked not only a change of medium but a fundamental change of strategy in the exploration of perception that has motivated the efforts of both—individually and jointly—since the early 1960s.

The present exhibition documents the collaborative projects of

Arakawa and Gins: *The Mechanism of Meaning*, 1963–73, 1996 (see pp. 54–111) and the architectural sites of reversible destiny. But as Gins herself insists, these collaborations have their roots in Arakawa’s painting, the medium to which he devoted most of his time and energy from 1961 through the 1980s. Although it appears at present that Arakawa’s painted oeuvre is now closed, that body of work, so intensely rewarding in its own right, contains the germ of the ideas that found expression in reversible destiny architecture. My purpose here is to review Arakawa’s development as a painter and to assess the relationship of that two-dimensional work to his architectural collaborations with Gins.

THE PAINTER WORKING IN THE PHILOSOPHER’S HOUSE

The poet Howard Nemerov once penned a lyric homage to Paul Klee and titled it *The Painter Dreaming in the Scholar’s House*. Klee’s art, which sang “the secret history of the mind,” could serve as a model “for all research that follows spirit where it goes.”⁴ In a similar vein, looking at the early work of Arakawa, one might dub him “the painter working in the philosopher’s house,” for his paintings could be understood as a model—or, rather, as a stimulus—for rethinking some of the most fundamental philosophical questions. Philosophers have acknowledged this affinity: Arakawa “makes us think through the eyes,” wrote Jean-François Lyotard. For Arthur Danto, Arakawa “is the most philosophical of living artists.” Italo Calvino, though technically no philosopher, concurred with this assessment; what came to mind when he looked at an Arakawa, Calvino declared, “is the mind itself.”⁵ Yes, the mind comes to mind, but in looking at Arakawa’s paintings and his collaborative work with Gins, the poverty of the very concept “mind” also becomes evident.

What has made Arakawa so attractive to thinkers has, arguably, long made him an enigma to most of the art world. From Pop and Minimalism through the multifarious forms of Postmodernism, Arakawa’s project has been resistant to the dominant critical paradigms of the last three-and-a-half decades. Much of the best critical writing on Arakawa’s painting has focused on its abstruseness. Even Armin Zweite, publishing one of the most rigorous and penetrating essays on Arakawa, cautiously and self-effacingly subtitled his text “attempt at an approach,” and concluded that the work was intended to remain an enigma.⁶

The earliest paintings made by Arakawa in the United States—after he arrived from Japan in 1961—confirm that from the beginning his conception of painting has had little in common with either traditional or contemporary practice in that medium, and certain of his statements suggest an equivocal attitude toward it, a detachment from it, in the sense that he is not concerned with the advance, or extension, of painting for painting's sake. "Painting is only an exercise, never more than that," he once said, and his subsequent development seems to have confirmed this.⁷

Yet, Arakawa's painting is not completely without any relationship to contemporary practice. In his work of the 1960s, for example, certain aspects may remind one superficially of Jasper Johns (the extensive use of stenciled letters) or of the cerebral preoccupations of Robert Morris, with whom he shared a studio for a time. The pristine surfaces and the cool, mechanical-drawing style of these early paintings, their renunciation of retinal charm and "expressive" painterly gestures, may suggest affinities with the "post-painterly" sensibility that gained ascendancy in New York in the early 1960s, a moment that witnessed an emphatic rejection of the pictorial rhetoric of Abstract Expressionism. But it would be utterly false to link Arakawa's art with the agenda of any form of Minimalism. This becomes clear enough if one recalls a well-known interview conducted in 1964 with a celebrated contemporary of Arakawa. It is a document that well conveys the temper of the New York art world in those days:

FRANK STELLA: . . . I always get into arguments with people who want to retain the old values in painting—the humanistic values that they always find on the canvas. If you pin them down, they always end up asserting that there is something there besides the paint on the canvas. My painting is based on the fact that only what can be seen there is there. It really is an object. . . . All I want anyone to get out of my paintings, and all I ever get out of them, is the fact that you can see the whole idea without any confusion. . . . What you see is what you see.

BRUCE GLASER: That doesn't leave too much afterwards, does it?

STELLA: I don't know what else there is.⁸

As we shall see, Arakawa's paintings of these years attest that there is in fact a great deal else; what one sees may indeed be what one sees insofar as seeing is understood as purely retinal, as an activity of sense isolated from mind. But seeing is not isolated from mind; there is no such simple equation between what is *seen* and what is *perceived*. Seeing is inextricably entangled with a much more complex activity than merely registering with one's eyes what is optically there.

In this regard, in those days Arakawa's greatest affinity was probably with Marcel Duchamp, with whom he was friendly, and who identified with the ideal, discredited by Modernism, of painting at the service of the mind.⁹ Like Duchamp's art, Arakawa's is also at the service of the mind, or at the service of something usually associated with this inadequate and elusive concept. As with Duchamp, those beholders blind to the nature of

Arakawa's quest will find little to seduce them on what Duchamp called the "retinal" plane. The activity that an Arakawa painting stimulates *behind* the retina is much richer than the spare configurations the work offers to the senses.

Despite these affinities between Duchamp's enterprise and Arakawa's, the rediscovery and canonization of Duchamp that took place in the art world in the 1960s helped little in furthering the understanding and appreciation of Arakawa's project, at least in the United States. Yet, in some respects Arakawa seems more truly in the lineage of Duchamp than do those American artists whose piecemeal appropriation of his ideas has led them to be playfully labeled "bachelors" to Duchamp as "bride."¹⁰

As with Duchamp, the process that an Arakawa painting sets in motion within the beholder is more important than the work itself, which is not to be fetishized and has no value apart from that process. Or, rather, one might say that the painting is but a sensuous stimulus for the real work, which is formed by the viewer's perceiving and is only partly visible. The forming of this largely invisible work begins with the act of looking. Yet, the received paradigms for looking at art only get in the way when standing before an Arakawa—here we must jettison all inherited assumptions and expectations in order to engage in an open, intense, and concentrated questioning of the work itself.

Arguably, the early paintings are the best introduction to the most recent work of Arakawa and Gins: the basic rules of the game are already operative; the major issues are already enunciated; and the paintings themselves are on the whole less daunting to the uninitiated. Those issues concern the nature of perception—perception as a process not merely engaging mind and body but *constituting* them in a subjective, self-conscious sense and serving as an index of the relationship between the two.¹¹ Arakawa's painting was in effect a laboratory, an experimental station for stimulating mind/body operations so that we may observe that of which we are normally unconscious, so that we may perceive ourselves perceiving. All of this was directed toward the development of a more profound knowledge of what we are and of our human capacities. To that extent, Arakawa succeeded in endowing painting with a function in this age—the age of its alleged functionlessness.

EARLY PAINTINGS

Although conception without perception is merely empty, perception without conception is blind . . . We can have words without a world but no world without words or other symbols.—Nelson Goodman¹²

Even when painting was Arakawa's primary activity, he claimed that as such it was not his true medium: that medium, rather, was "the area of perception created, located, and demonstrated by the combining (melting) of languages."¹³ For "languages," one should read types of signs, one of which was nearly always language, while others were iconic or indexical or a combination of the two.¹⁴ In an overtly metapictorial canvas of 1968–69, titled *Paintings*, which consists entirely of a cursive text by

Arakawa about his painting, he used the phrase "compound not mixture" to characterize his combining of languages or modes of signification. The nature of this compound of word and image varies, but the introduction of language, whether as compositional element or merely as title, is never redundant; it never merely names what is already recognizable. The image does not illustrate the words, nor do the words merely label the image. Rather, linguistic elements function as *interpreters*, that is, as a means by which to interpret the graphic elements.¹⁵ Yet, there is a paradox here, for even as words help us to perceive the graphic configuration as an iconic sign, frequently they also render that same configuration problematic.

Adapting the concept of the "language game" from Ludwig Wittgenstein, it is tempting to call these early Arakawa paintings "signification games." Wittgenstein's language games proceed by means of setting up arbitrary relationships between linguistic signs and things or actions as elementary systems of communication. These languages he sets up as "*objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language, by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities."¹⁶ But Arakawa's signification games had a different goal: his paintings, he explained, aimed "to trap questions, areas, operations, answers: to make them visible by combining two or more languages. Draw and name it."¹⁷ Arakawa combined different types and/or systems of signs, but rather than doing so in order to throw light on the nature of signification itself, he was more interested in the *process* set in motion in the beholder by the attempt to interpret these signs. What this means will become clearer as we examine some of his earliest paintings.

On the surface, the painting *Untitled (TUBES, TUBE)*, executed in 1963–64, appears simple enough. It presents two identical graphic forms, each consisting of two vertical parallel lines closed on each end by a circle. They differ only in one respect: the lines of the form on the left are painted in intermittently changing hues of yellow, red, green, blue, and gray, while the form on the right is rendered in dark gray lines. The difficulty begins with the words printed in stenciled letters below the drawings, identifying them as tubes. These labels induce us to interpret the flat configurations as volumetric, but they also spawn confusion. For while the singular form of the noun on the right is in agreement with the singular image above it, that same configuration on the left is designated by the word "tubes." At first, we might interpret this discrepancy between the word and the image as an indication that the plural form of the label is mistaken. But, then, other possible interpretations present themselves. Is this contradiction the result of an error in labeling, or does the label denote an intention which the drawing has failed to fulfill? In other words: is there an error in labeling or an error in drawing? Is this "draw and name it" or "name and draw it?" There is one way—by *interpreting color as a sign of plurality*—that we can resolve the contradiction between word and image and thereby make sense out of this painting. The tube on the left, above the word "tubes," is rendered in multiple colors, while the tube on the right, above the singular form of the noun, is rendered

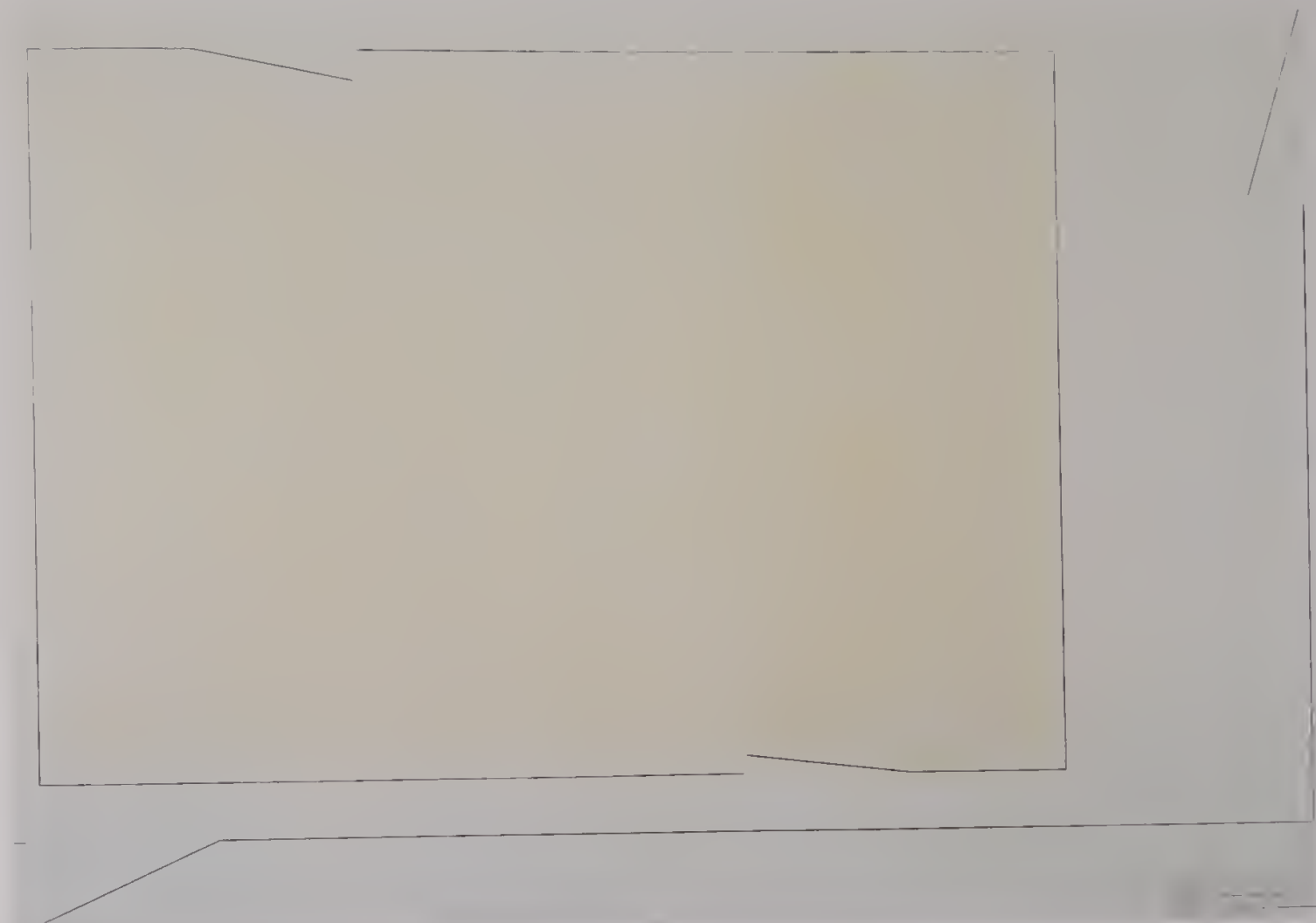
monochromatically, in graphite. Quantity is shown not iconically, as we would expect, but symbolically, as in language. Just as the plurality of an object is signified not by multiplying its sign but by adding "s" to it, within this sign system a plurality of forms is signified by rendering a single form in multiple colors. This is a good example of what Arakawa meant by creating an "area of perception" by the "combining of languages"—an area of perception that is richer than could be created by either type of sign in isolation.

This compound form of signification, in which certain features of the object or referent are depicted iconically (for example, shape, proportions) while quantity is expressed symbolically, generates a curious tension within the viewer. It means that in looking at the single tube on the left we must form a picture of several tubes; while looking at the identical shape on the right we are to picture only one tube. The linguistic message appears to be in conflict with the iconic message.¹⁸ This conflict of codes, this contradiction between what we see iconically and what the text instructs us to think, disrupts the familiar habits of perception and also heightens the viewer's awareness of his or her own body in that process. This is an example of what Arakawa and Gins in *The Mechanism of Meaning* called "splitting of meaning" and "reassembling."¹⁹ In one panel (see p. 77, fig. 7.3) of subdivision 7. *Splitting of Meaning*, for example, the viewer is instructed to "SAY one THINK two." In a panel (see p. 81, fig. 8.2) of 8. *Reassembling*, which shows image "A" as an inchoate scribble and image "B" as four squares, we are instructed, "PERCEIVE A AS B." But it is more than meaning that is being split; the act of perception itself—which, to the extent that we are aware of it at all, is usually experienced as an instantaneous, unitary process—is here broken down into discrete stages, accomplished by discrete faculties.

Arakawa and Gins have used the phrase "coordination of the senses" to describe this gradual forming of perception.²⁰ Although Arakawa probably was not aware of it at the time, the perceptual experience that takes place when a viewer is in front of his paintings has an interesting relationship to what cognitive scientists call "binding." Language comprehension and the various operations of perception are localized processes within the brain; they occur in different regions of the cortex. Experiments have shown that even different visual features such as shape, color, volume, and movement are processed by the firing of different neurons in different locations. As Francis Crick explained, "Our experience of perceptual unity . . . suggests that the brain in some way binds together, in a mutually coherent way, all those neurons actively responding to different aspects of a perceived object."²¹ Of course, if binding is indeed what occurs, it is something we are not conscious of when we perceive a familiar object; we experience only perceptual unity. In what will become a typical feature of many of Arakawa's paintings, we experience these separate processings before we experience that unity, that binding.

In the early work, the combinations of signifiers that Arakawa used always address the beholder exclusively through the visual system,²² although the different types of signs, of course, signify in different ways.





facing page
 Arakawa
Untitled (TUBES, TUBE), 1963-64
 Acrylic, oil, and pencil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches

above
 Arakawa
The Place of Saying, 1963
 Acrylic, oil, and pencil on canvas, 65 x 97 inches

Time and patience are required to correlate and interpret these differing signifiers, due to what amounts to a degree of sensory deprivation. Language must supplement the meager iconic or indexical signifiers, and even then there may be a period of bafflement before the “viewer” succeeds in constructing in his or her mind the visual signified of the painting.

In *The Place of Saying*, 1963, the asymmetry between what is optically apprehended and what is ultimately perceived is initially less a source of puzzlement than in *Untitled (TUBES, TUBE)*, but in the end is even more emphatic. The composition is dominated by two identical interfacing linear forms, one the inverse of the other. The area between the lines is thinly colored in a sort of eggshell hue that distinguishes it from the remainder of the canvas, which remains a pristine white. Standing before this two-and-a-half-meter-wide painting one might easily interpret it as an unusually spare example of Color-field painting. Because of its coloration, this area assumes a figure/ground relationship to the unpainted periphery of the canvas. But the inscribed stenciled lettering that descends vertically from the upper right-hand edge, a fragment of the designation “[LIVIN]G ROOM,” provides a directive for interpreting the lines that contradicts this spatial configuration. It leads us to reinterpret these lines as *signs*, as elements of a floor plan. The lines, it now becomes clear, are to be read as signifiers for walls; the diagonal lines, which prevent closure, are therefore doors. What we initially interpreted as a configuration of open lines we now perceive, with the aid of language, as an aggregate of enclosed three-dimensional spaces. But the painting—unlike other two-dimensional paintings with “pictorial space,” whether figurative or abstract—does not produce this experience of space illusionistically, by generating sensations analogous to those of actual space. Rather, the experience of space is unlocked by a purely conventional semiotic code.

Now, because the painting is so relentlessly flat, because the space we experience cannot be located in what we see, in what is accessible to the senses, the entire experience of space is centered in, is formed within, the beholder, and for that reason that perception of space seems all the more intense. Yet, this is not a disembodied, merely mental, experience, for as we become conscious of the spaces that open up within us, we become conscious of our bodies as well. The architectural space that we construct within our minds, which is configured on a horizontal plane, exists in a state of tension with its pictorial sign, which hangs at ninety degrees. As a result of the ensuing tension, we gain a heightened awareness of our own bodies, of our bodies as the locus of perception within which that space originates.

“I flatten what is the view to demonstrate how it is perceiving that gives volume to space,” explained Arakawa; “there is no space except that which the perceiver forms.”²³ Clearly that principle is already operative in this work of 1963. “The place of saying,” the place in which space is formed and the world is created, is the beholder.²⁴

What a strange type of painting! The medium itself seems strangely impaired. Arakawa disables the very power of visual art to *show* us things; the “viewer’s” expectations are repeatedly thwarted. The few who do not

impatiently turn heel when confronted with such conundrums must then labor to complete in their “inner” eye the signified they *cannot see*. The experience of “viewing” an Arakawa painting is thus a kind of visual analogue to blindness, even if, paradoxically, all the data that allow us to constitute the image in our minds are obtained through the eye.

That this effect of sensory deprivation was deliberate has now become evident, thanks to the publication in 1994 of Gins’s *Helen Keller or Arakawa*.²⁵ The book amply confirms, with many references to the paintings, a remark Arakawa made to me several years ago, when I asked him whether any one book, any one thinker, had been especially important for setting his course. Based on my conversations with him and Gins herself and on what I then knew of his paintings, I expected him to cite something by Wittgenstein or, perhaps, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. His response was as unexpected as it was unequivocal: “The autobiography of Helen Keller.” His familiarity with this book went back to his youth in Japan; through his older sister, who had been an enthusiastic admirer of Keller, Arakawa discovered the famous deaf-blind woman from Alabama. Although this connection has been totally ignored in the critical literature, Gins has now, with her book, made the connection impossible to disregard. *Helen Keller or Arakawa* takes the form of an often playful but always thoughtful amplification of the autobiography and accounts of Keller’s life by those who knew her. While the Keller connection does not necessarily simplify the process of “looking” at a work by Arakawa, it has made his project, whether pursued alone or in collaboration with Gins, much more intelligible.

Keller, born into a prosperous family in 1880, lost her sight and hearing at the age of nineteen months, following a serious illness. Her “awakening” began more than five years later when, just before her seventh birthday, her parents hired a remarkable, exceptionally determined tutor, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, herself partly blind. Within a short time, Sullivan taught the gifted young girl language and reading through the manual alphabet, communicated with the fingers into the palm of Keller’s hand. She became in effect the deaf-blind girl’s eyes, ears, and mouth. Through the manual alphabet, she described distant phenomena that Keller could never have known by the three senses that remained to her.²⁶ Keller attended Radcliffe College (where she wrote her autobiography) with Sullivan at her side, manually communicating the substance of the lectures.

Those endowed with sight and hearing can only imagine how Keller represented the world to herself; certainly it was a less familiar place than her autobiography and copious letters might lead one to believe, since she often borrowed or adapted metaphors and descriptive phrases either from Sullivan or from the many books she read. A striking example is her description, in a letter, of a visit she made at age fourteen to the Statue of Liberty:

Liberty is a gigantic figure of woman in Greek draperies, holding in her right hand a torch. . . . A spiral stairway leads from the base of this

pedestal to the torch. We climbed up to the head . . . and viewed the scene on which Liberty gazes day and night, and O, how wonderful it was! . . . The glorious bay lay calm and beautiful in the October sunshine, and the ships came and went like idle dreams; those seaward going slowly disappeared like clouds that change from gold to gray; those homeward coming sped more quickly like birds that seek their mother's nest.²⁷

As a deaf-blind person, Keller could have breathed in the briny fragrance of the bay, sensed the warmth of the October sun, and even felt the vibrations of the ship's whistles. But she had no sensory capacity for the perception of distant objects. She could not have meaningfully experienced the form of the colossal statue with her fingers, nor seen the ships coming and slowly disappearing. Neither could the cloud metaphor nor the colors of gold and gray have been meaningful to her from her own sense experience. There is no way Keller could possibly have experienced such things except through Sullivan's descriptions.

Undoubtedly, many readers of the autobiography have shared the frustration of its editor, John Alfred Macy (Sullivan's husband), who regretted that it did not contain more passages concerning "what speech meant to her, of how she felt the statues, the dogs, the chickens at the poultry show, and how she stood in the aisle of St. Bartholomew's and felt the organ rumble. . . . The reason they are comparatively few is that all her life she has been trying to be 'like other people,' and so she too often described things not as they appear to her, but as they appear to one with eyes and ears."²⁸ Gins characterized this tendency as Keller's "usual linguistic covering over of [her] stark individuality."²⁹ In reality, of course, she did "not see with her eyes, but through the inner faculty to serve which eyes were given to us."³⁰ But only occasionally do we get a sense of the world she formed through that "inner faculty."

It is this world that captured Arakawa's imagination—a world different from the one most of us know. Keller's world was formed with the aid of her three remaining senses, and the loss of sight and hearing were compensated to a great degree by language. There is indeed a sort of parallel to Wittgenstein's language games; for just as they offer "*objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language," a vicarious experience of the radically different perception of the deaf-blind can foster a *heightened awareness of the process of perception itself*, through which each of us forms the world and, in turn, ourselves in our own subjectivity. This experience also reveals *alternative possibilities* of perception, and hence also of knowing, being, and acting in the world. This, surely, is the interest that Keller held and still holds for Arakawa and Gins.

The privileged place of language in Arakawa's early paintings parallels its crucial role in Keller's perception of the world, for which it functioned as a kind of surrogate sight. "Language," wrote Macy, "was her liberator, and from the first she cherished it."³¹ Keller described her awakening through the learning of language: "Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought . . . every object which I touched

seemed to quiver with life. That was because I saw everything with the strange, new sight that had come to me."³²

Arakawa's early paintings, as I have said, offer something analogous to this "strange, new sight." He strove to produce in sighted persons, by visual means, an experience that approximates the perception of the blind; using the limited stimuli provided in the painting, the viewer must construct in the mind an image of something that he or she cannot fully perceive, something of which the painting offers a limited sensory experience. Accordingly, the pictorial evidence is fragmented and often mystifying, even if the ultimate signified of the painting may itself be familiar. Most often the paintings present a world without familiar visual percepts. In such a world, language is never a redundant label, for only through language does the world come into being. Heidegger's assertion, "Only where the word for the thing has been found is the thing a thing,"³³ certainly applies to Keller's experience, as it does to Arakawa's paintings.

Language is always a conspicuous element in Arakawa's early paintings, even by its occasional absence. While most of these works consist of a combination of words and iconic and/or indexical signs, there are a few works consisting primarily of language and others where language is completely absent, but that absence is almost always experienced by the beholder as a deficiency, as a condition of obscurity.

In 1968–69, Arakawa completed a number of paintings dominated by or consisting almost exclusively of language. Here, the linguistic component goes beyond mere labels; the text may take the form of contradictory propositions about the painting ("I HAVE DECIDED TO LEAVE THIS CANVAS COMPLETELY BLANK") or nearly impossible directives to the viewer ("IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE FORGET ABOUT ANY PLACE NOT MARKED PLACE," whose prominent inscription along the lower edge of a canvas in which the word appears eight times virtually insures that we cannot forget).³⁴ These are variants of the "splitting of meaning" we observed in *Untitled (TUBES, TUBE)*. Some of the most amusing, however, fall into a different class: they take the form of fairly straightforward cursive inscriptions of recipes for banana cake, lamb stew,³⁵ or coconut-milk cake. Into the last of these, *Sky no. 2 (Coconut Milk Cake)*, 1968, Arakawa introduced his familiar stenciled letters as a heading. At the bottom of the painting, we read the ingredients, inscribed individually in stenciled letters, with arrows indicating the location of the invisible substances. Otherwise, there is nothing unusual about this as a visual artifact—except that it is a painting! And despite its banality as painting, the perceptual experience it generates is a veritable orgy for Keller's three senses—flavors, fragrances, textures are conjured up by the words "EGG," "SALT," "MILK," "COCONUT," "VANILLA," "BUTTER," "FLOUR," "SUGAR." Of course, to the sighted, all of these conjure up visual images as well, but their differences are more vividly perceived through the senses of taste, touch, and smell.³⁶ Gradually, we become aware that baking and eating the cake are intensely pleasurable activities for which sight and hearing are ultimately superfluous. An apt Arakawan directive for the viewers of this painting might be: "Close your eyes and open your mouth!"

COCONUT MILK CAKE

Two 9-Inch Round Cakes

Preheat oven to 350°

Have all ingredients at about 75°. Have ready:

1½ cups freshly grated coconut

Sift before measuring:

3 cups cake flour

Resift it with:

3 teaspoons double-acting baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

Sift:

1½ cups sugar

Cream well:

¼ cup butter

Add the sifted sugar gradually and continue creaming until these ingredients are very light. Beat in:

3 beaten egg yolks

Add the sifted flour mixture in 3 parts to the batter mixture, alternately with:

¼ cup coconut milk or milk

½ teaspoon vanilla

Stir the batter until smooth after each addition. Then add ¾ of a cup of the grated coconut. Whips until stiff, but not dry:

3 egg whites

Fold the egg whites gently into the batter. Bake in greased larger pans for about 25 minutes. To serve, fill between the layers with:

EGG

MILK

COCONUT

SALT

SUGAR

VANILLA

BUTTER

FLOUR

SKY
ARAKAWA
1968

Akakawa
Sky no. 2 (Coconut Milk Cake), 1968
Acrylic and oil on canvas, 48 x 36 inches

Sculpting no. 1, 1961–62, exemplifies the other extreme: the absence of language, an absence that is acutely felt in this case. It is a spare canvas consisting of a series of boxes—eleven of them rectangles, the twelfth irregular—along the left side of the painting, each of which has an arrow pointing to the edge, presumably linking the box to an object that lies beyond the visual field. In some places, the arrows from several boxes converge toward a single site; in the lower left corner, instead of a box there is a single point. Along the right edge is a vertical line, intersected by a single arrow. In the bottom right corner is a box indicating the title, name, and date of the painting. That is all.

The “sculpting” of the title is a metaphor for the *process* of articulating the blank continuum of the canvas, not the *result* of that process. (It seems consistent with the rules of Arakawa’s version of blindman’s buff that the metaphor is drawn from a tactile process.) The results of that articulation remain as yet nameless, for it is not the boxes that are sculpted; they only indicate the *sites* of the sculpting, sites awaiting names so that the world, and thought, can spring into being. The painting is one of the first Arakawa completed after his arrival in New York, but precisely the isolation and intensification of this process of articulation, of the forming of discrete entities out of a blank continuum, would become the central issue of his work. Sculpting became “cleaving,” the unidentified referents of the arrows became “perceptual landing sites,” and “blank” became their precondition or ground. We shall return to these terms below.

The overwhelming majority of Arakawa’s paintings fall between these two extremes, with a more equally balanced combination of the linguistic, the iconic, and the indexical. *Alphabet Skin*, 1965–66, is a more typical example of Arakawa’s game of “draw and name it” and an especially rich one. In some ways, it is a later, more elaborate variant of *The Place of Saying*. But in contrast to that work, the motif is now readily identifiable as a room, due to the foreshortened windows along the top and bottom of the tripartite canvas. Five of these six windows are slightly ajar, with the openings revealing pure colors outside: pale blue, green, gray, yellow, and pink. Within the long, narrow horizontal space between the windows, indexical marks denote the relative positions of objects, but not their shapes or any other characteristic aspects. Only by means of names do these marks become identifiable as the loci of particular objects: a foot, a bookcase, a bed, clothes, a desk, a cat, and so on. In the lower left of the right-hand panel, there are two curious labels, denoting “human skin” and a “shadow,” the latter indicated, it appears, by a sort of blemish, with a skein of bright white spray paint marking it. It appears significant that it is only the windows that are recognizable iconically, that is, without labels, for they are a source of light, and hence partly visible to many blind persons. Everything else is marked with regard to place and identified by language. The analogy to Keller’s experience of the world is obvious. Small wonder that Gins playfully attributed to Keller the remark: “These are among the most realistic paintings I’ve never seen.”³⁷

TRACKING PERCEPTION: “CLEAVING,” “BLANK,” AND “LANDING SITES”

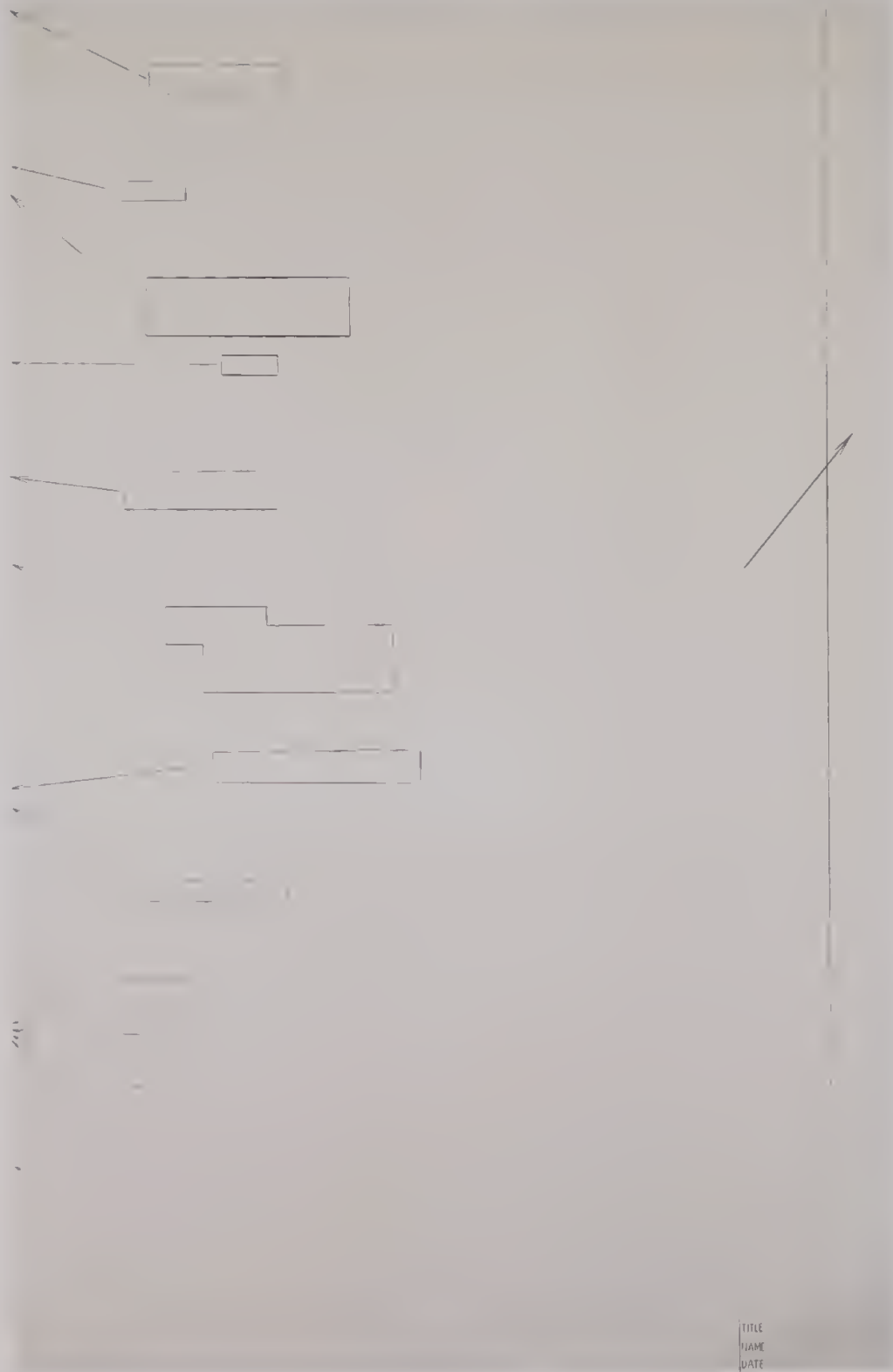
But why “alphabet skin”? Does it refer to the human skin that is identified by label? Or to the deaf-blind Keller learning and utilizing the alphabet only through her *skin*, through the manual alphabet and Braille, the alphabet that had endowed her with a strange, new sight through which her world came into being? I lean toward the latter explanation but am inclined to carry it further, possibly beyond Arakawa’s own intended meaning. Just as skin functions as a sort of envelope of the body (a metaphor brilliantly incarnated in certain sculptures by Kiki Smith), language becomes a set of envelopes for the blind, containers for dividing up the tactile continuum into discrete objects.³⁸ In this regard, language, in the form of these alphabet skins, functions as vision does for the sighted. For as Gins has put it:

Characteristic of the sense of sight is a constant slicing up of the world into separate parts at seemingly some remove from the ongoing sensing—not at all how it is with the sense of touch. Sight *cleaves* apart thing from thing and person from thing; that is why Merleau-Ponty called this the fragmentary sense. Those not having this cutting-off maneuver available to them . . . must live in a world that remains all of its own thickness, one that moves always through its own texture, more immersed than immersed in its own self-sameness.”³⁹ (emphasis added)

The term “cleaving” that Gins employed is one that she and Arakawa have used in both of its ostensibly antithetical senses, that is, the more common denotation, being “to divide or to separate from,” and the opposite meaning, “to adhere or cling to.” Through this process of cleaving, all thought, feeling, perception, and so on are formed by and out of what they call “blank,” leaving the rest blank as before: “During the cleaving something becomes apparent and something remains blank.”⁴⁰ The sites of such cleaving they call “perceptual landing sites.” “It is unknown to whom or to what cleaving ultimately answers,” they declare, “but, along the way, cleaving, in its various intensities, sculpts the perceived world by means of perceptual landing sites.”⁴¹ (I examine the concept of “landing site” more closely in the final section of this essay.)

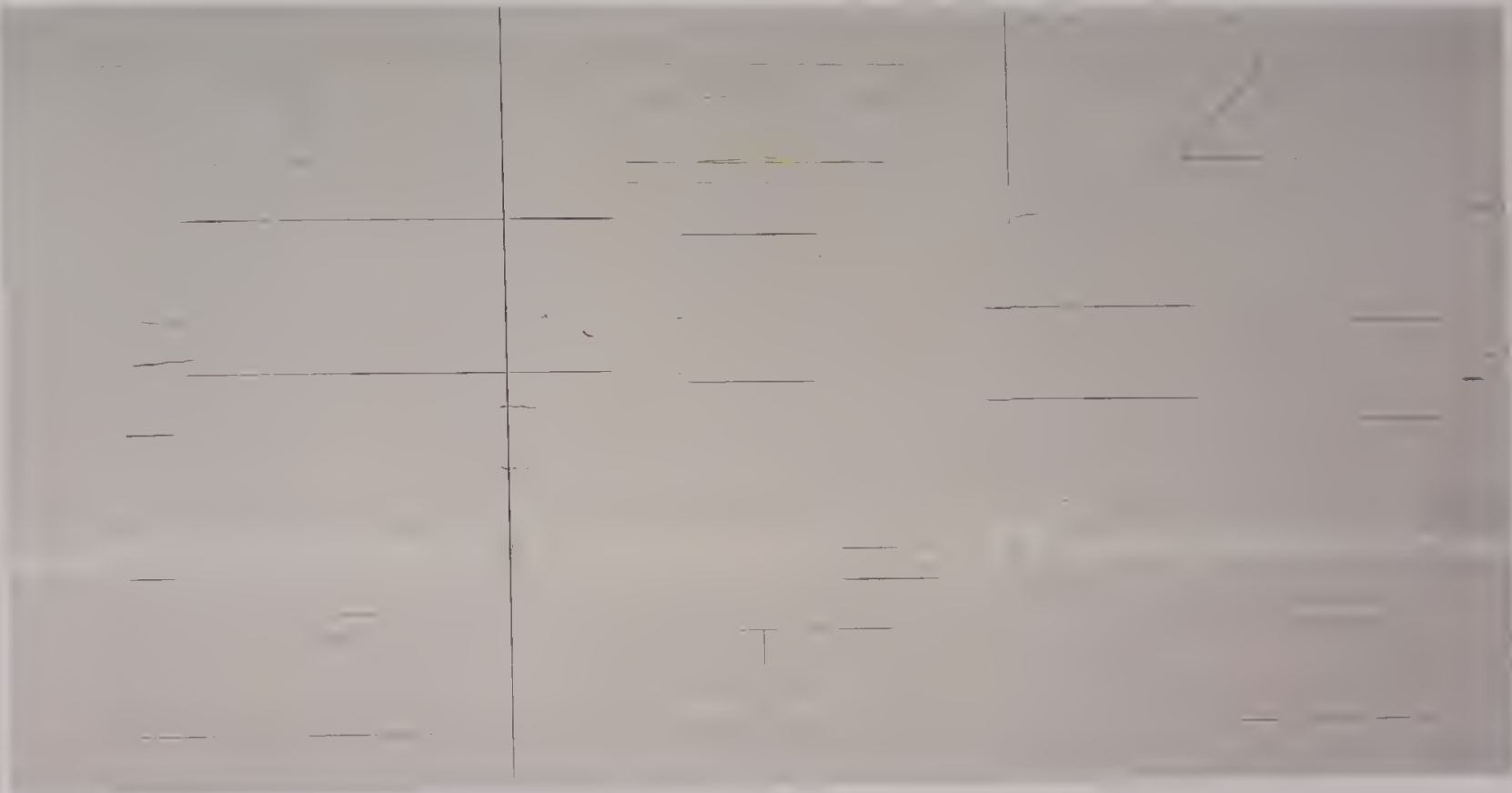
The notion of blank—to call blank a concept would be to distort its nature—is central to the project of Arakawa and Gins. Although they began using the term only at the end of the 1960s, that to which they gave the name blank had been an issue in Arakawa’s art from 1961 on. Beginning in the 1970s, the word “blank” began to occur in titles of Arakawa’s paintings, and propositions about blank were incorporated into the paintings themselves.⁴²

Although Arakawa and Gins often playfully employ the word “blank” in some of its accepted dictionary meanings—as in “point blank” or “to draw a blank”—blank in the sense in which they use the word with reference to their project is not encompassed by any established definitions. Perhaps the most succinct and accessible formulation of what Arakawa and Gins mean by blank has been made not by them but by Dagmar



TITLE
NAME
DATE

Arokawa
Sculpting no. 1 1961-62
Acrylic and pencil on canvas, 72 x 48 inches



Arokawa
Alphabet Skin, 1965–66
Acrylic, pencil, and oil on canvas, three panels, 94 x 180 inches overall

Buchwald: blank “denotes by approximation that which precedes and underlies all thought, action and perception and cannot be directly thought, acted, or perceived.”⁴⁴ Blank might be defined as a primal, unarticulated, non-sensible medium out of which everything linked to consciousness—feeling, thinking, acting, perceiving, indeed subjectivity itself, the very sense of a self engaged in these activities—is configured, configured by virtue of a latent energy within blank.⁴⁴ The condensation, the configuring of these energies, is what Arakawa and Gins have termed “cleaving.”

It is, simply put, this process of cleaving, whereby the changing densities of energy configure themselves within the primal, undifferentiated medium of blank, which is the true object of Arakawa’s painting; the painting is purposively designed to initiate and energize this very process in the beholder, who in experiencing it becomes the observer of her own observing, the percipient of her own perceiving. This has been Arakawa’s goal from the beginning, even before he and Gins succeeded in developing a vocabulary and conceptual framework for discussing it.⁴⁵

Arakawa’s signification games, that is, his strategy of combining languages or sign systems in an interdependent yet often contradictory relationship, emerge as central to the pursuit of this goal, for the issue of signification is integral to blank. Blank is that which precedes and energizes signification; it is the generative ground of signification, which is formed out of blank and thereby differentiates blank as blank by leaving it blank.⁴⁶ Therefore, at a given moment of cleaving, signification and blank exist in what might be called a figure/ground relationship. Because blank lies outside signification, it cannot be directly verbalized, cannot be directly pictured, cannot be apprehended by the senses or directly conceived within the mind. But Gins argues that these incapacities may be due to limits not of the human organism but only of any given single signifying system. She proposes that we recast Wittgenstein’s maxim at the end of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*—“What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence”—as follows:

Should you find that what you wish to refer to is in any way indeterminate, make no attempt to convey this through that sign-system upon which you rely (through only one way of speaking) but go ahead and leave it blank. . . . what needs to be conveyed about the central symbolizing and image-forming process is its containing of a sphere of action that is *nonconveyable through only one way of putting it*. This will remain blank to us until we have constructed a way for it to “say” itself to us.⁴⁷ (emphasis added)

Arakawa’s early paintings were a preliminary stage of the attempt to construct such a way. One might say that if blank is not shown, if it is not signified directly, it is intimated, it is tracked in the gap between two signifying systems, whose initially bewildering interrelationship leads us to experience that process of cleaving occurring out of blank. Arakawa’s art does not signify blank, then, but by means of its signification games it

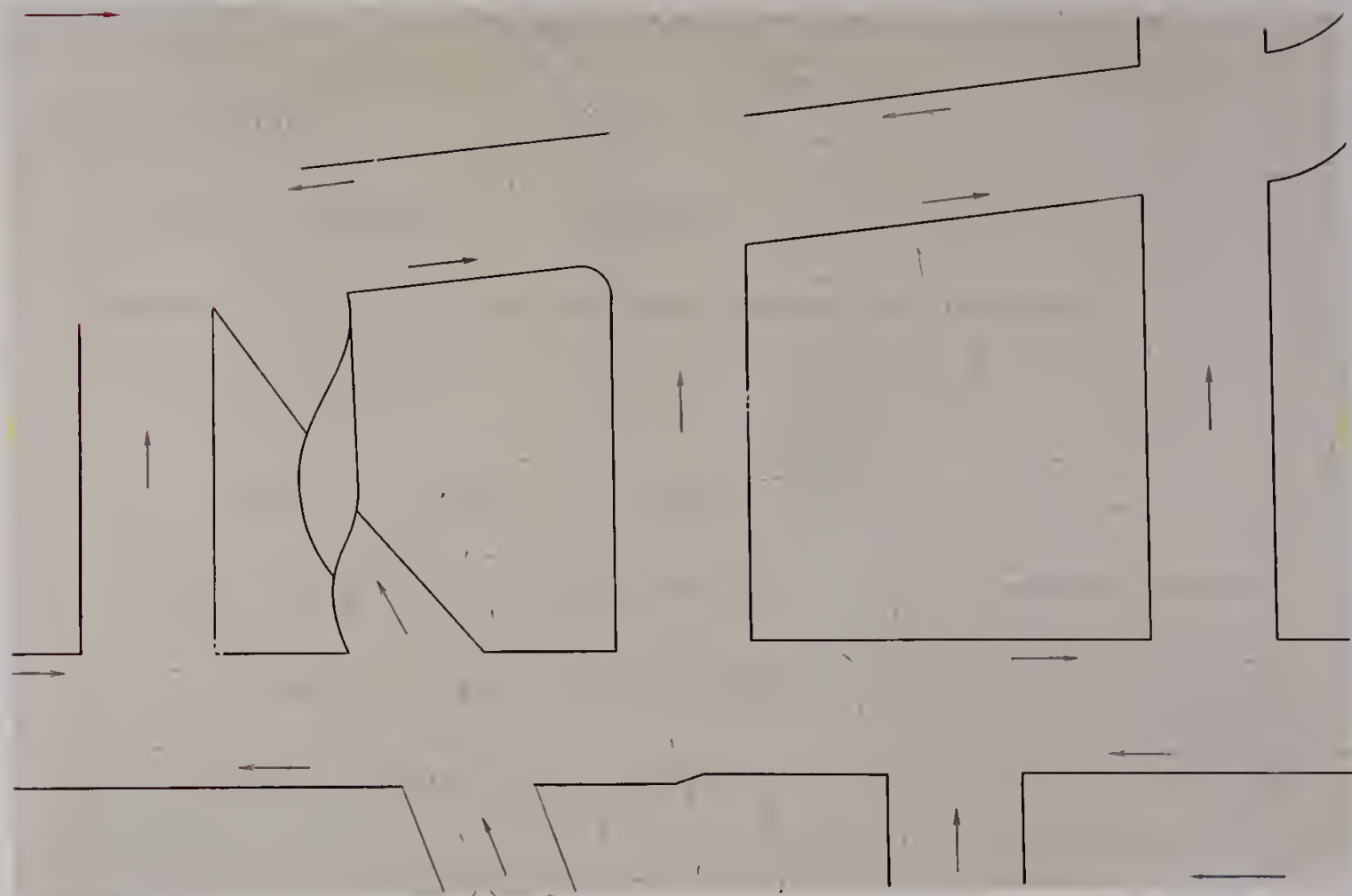
leads us to an experience of “forming blank,” that is, of cleaving occurring within blank. The painting *Blank Dots*, 1982, exemplifies this process.

Blank Dots is a characteristic example of Arakawa’s paintings of the 1970s and early 1980s: from the relatively simple word/image configurations of the 1960s he moved toward larger-scale canvases and greater visual and linguistic complexity. In place of the simple naming characteristic of paintings of the 1960s, Arakawa now introduced long, usually hermetic propositions. The expanded dimensions and greater density of sensory input slows down the process of perception, thereby rendering discrete its stages of self-articulation, so that we might observe it slowly forming, that we might observe cleaving. *Blank Dots* consists of a long proposition inscribed in gray stenciled letters over three superimposed diagrammatic schemes: two of an unlabeled street plan, including arrows indicating traffic flow, and a third consisting of dozens of arrows arranged to suggest patterns of movement. The text reads:

WHEN IT ITSELF,
AN OPEN POSSIBILITY FOR REASSEMBLY,
BEHAVES IN WAVES ACROSS/THROUGH CONFIGURATED ENERGIES,
AT ITS OWN PACE,
IT GRADUALLY BECOMES A “FORMING BLANK”
INTO WHICH ALL CONFIGURATIONS ARE DRAWN, ABSORBED,
CONDENSED.
AND OUT OF WHICH UNRECOGNIZABLE PLACES JUMP,
SHAPING VOLUMES INTO IMAGES.⁴⁸

At first sight, the painting is perplexing. First of all, the meaning of the proposition itself is elusive. Second, in contrast to early works like *Untitled (TUBES, TUBE)* and *The Place of Saying*, it is now difficult to determine the relationship between the words and the image—they appear to have nothing whatsoever to do with one another. Even when the proposition is read on a printed page, it is difficult enough to understand, but when spread over a surface of such large dimensions the difficulty is greatly exacerbated, for the scale of the work enforces a slow reading of the text: at first, we take in only individual words and short phrases; only after rereading the text several times can we grasp it as a syntactically coherent sentence and comprehend its semantic content. Yet, even then its meaning remains elusive, because we still do not know what the sentence refers to; we cannot picture any of its referents. The identity of the subject of the sentence, “it itself,” is unknown; and not one of the ten nouns signifies a concrete object.

If we persist in our efforts, however, we begin to unravel the enigma. We discover that the phrase “behaves in waves across/through configured energies at its own pace” *describes the text itself* in its slow unfolding across the swirling eddies of arrows, and the rest of the sentence describes its own effect on our perception of the graphic configurations beneath it. The *text* is the forming blank that draws, absorbs, and condenses these configurations into the gradually expanding domain of intelligibility; it



Arokawa
Blank Dots 1982
Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 138 inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of Gloria and Leonard Lurio, 1985

stimulates us, through its anticipatory reference to this perceptual event, to convert these iconic schemes into three-dimensional images within our minds. The painting, however, was not made for the sake of this solution, but for the sake of illuminating the process through which we arrive at the solution.

The strategies Arakawa employed in *Blank Dots* represent a significant advance over those of his paintings of the 1960s. Here he has succeeded, through the use of scale and the length and difficulty of the text, in slowing down the perceptual process so that we become aware of its microevents and microactions. Because the subject of the sentence is that perceptual process itself, we are, even before we become aware of it, lured into focusing on that process. We experience the action of cleaving, triggered by forming blank as perception configures itself within us.

It should be clearer now what Arakawa meant by saying that his goal at this time was "to trap questions, areas, operations, answers: to make them visible by combining two or more languages."⁴⁹ The eye is not intended merely to gaze placidly on these surfaces, in pursuit of the sort of aesthetic pleasures we normally associate with painting. These works do not exist for the purpose of stimulating purely plastic sensations or of expressing emotion; they are not intended as "expressions" of anything. Rather these works, like all of Arakawa's works, function as *reflectors*: they direct the complex, mysterious act of perception—the process of making sense of our sense impressions—back onto itself. Their difficulty serves to focus our attention on our own questioning, on our own groping for sense, on our unfolding attempt at "consistency building,"⁵⁰ as we seek to find intelligibility within these deceptively simple configurations. As Gins has put it, the work "presents a question no less worked out and convoluted than the organism that would seek to answer it."⁵¹ And it is for the sake of activating that organism so that we may observe it, so that we may observe ourselves observing, that these paintings were made.⁵²

PAINTINGS FOR CLOSED EYES

After the linguistically and iconically dense paintings of the 1970s and first half of the 1980s, Arakawa returned to a formal simplicity superficially reminiscent of his earliest works. This was more than a stylistic evolution; it was part of a fundamental change in rhetorical strategy. With the painting *Determining Body no. 1*, 1987–88, he introduced a wholly new concept: he included with each painting a platform from which it was to be viewed. These platforms, consisting of two or more joined panels covered with Plexiglas, may consist of photographically reproduced images or of solid color areas; most often, they occur in combination. In the first of such works, exhibited in 1988 at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in New York, the platforms lay flat on the floor, but shortly thereafter Arakawa began to raise them at an angle to form a ramp for viewing, and they became increasingly steep. With the series *Paintings for Closed Eyes*, 1989–90, first shown in 1990 at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, Arakawa developed this idea further. The ramps, which earlier had been placed either parallel or perpendicular to the axis of the painting on the wall,

were now placed at angles to it, thereby effecting a spatial tension between both elements. In a text from this time, Arakawa explained that he wanted to put an end to the idea of viewing as "a passive reviewing of actions taken by an artist. . . . The viewer enters the depiction as part of it."⁵³

In contrast to Arakawa's previous paintings, which incorporated schematic configurations of an iconic nature, these paintings are completely nonrepresentational in the sense that they refer to no palpable *object*. Moreover, their markings have become simpler, sparer, more uniform.⁵⁴ The earliest paintings with platforms comprised a variety of markings, including such devices for suggesting space as lines breaking the horizontal and vertical. But with *Paintings for Closed Eyes*, Arakawa achieved a drastic simplicity, restricting himself in several of the canvases to free-floating horizontal lines, rendered in graphite and acrylic on pristine white surfaces. The suggestion of space became simpler and subtler. The marks on the canvases do not appear to be traces of any object; they are no more than optical markers of space. Confronted with constant elements of varying lengths, the beholder interprets them spatially—the shorter lines seem farther back than the longer ones; denser lines can seem to be either near or far. This is not a palpable space with limits; there is nothing within the space—what we sense by means of these lines is, simply, space. And the lean materiality of the markings is such that the surface of the canvas, viewed from the enforced distance of the ramp, seems dematerialized; hence there is a sense of a space that lies not *behind* the sparsely painted surface but passes *through* it.

Arakawa introduced the ramps to enrich and intensify the perceiver's forming of space. The components function in at least three ways: First, the ramp renders explicit the space of beholding by heightening the beholder's awareness of his or her own physical presence before the work. Second, the contrasting orientation of the images on the platforms—near and far, foreshortened, upside down, and so forth—creates a sense of tension between the viewer's body and what is seen, thereby reinforcing the beholder's sense of body as an agent of the perceptual process. Third, and most important, the steeply sloping angle of the ramps heightens the tactile experience of viewing (the creaking of the platforms also adds an aural dimension to the experience). One must exert energy in moving against the force of gravity to ascend the ramps and then maintain one's equilibrium as one stands on the sloping surface to gaze at the painting. In some later works in the series, ropes are attached to the platforms to be gripped as an aid to maintaining a firm footing, further enhancing the viewer's tactile involvement. This intensification of the tactile sense is crucial to the beholder's forming of space, and Arakawa's strategy here discloses a fundamental insight into the nature of spatial perception. It finds a remarkable—and to him at the time unknown—corroboration in the writings of Hans Jonas:

The basic fact, of course, is that vision is the part-function of a whole body which experiences its dynamic involvement with the environment in the feeling of its position and changes of position. The "possession"

of a body of which the eyes are a part is indeed the primal fact of our "spatiality": the body not merely as occupying a volume of space geometrically but as always interacting with the world physically, even when at rest (e.g., by mere gravity). Without this background of non-visual, corporeal feeling and the accumulated experience of performed motion, the eyes alone would not supply the knowledge of space, not withstanding the imminent extension of the visual field.⁵⁵

The experience of space, or the forming of space, in this series of ensembles differs from that of Arakawa's previous works. In the earlier works, one perceives *configurations of specific volumes and spaces* that are signified by emphatically two-dimensional conventional renderings of those volumes and spaces. Standing before *Paintings for Closed Eyes*, the viewer experiences nothing so concrete. This space contains no volumes, no partitions, no boundaries; indeed, it has no articulation and so we cannot visualize it. And yet, when—after having looked at one of these paintings from its ramp—we follow the directive written on its surface and close our eyes, we have a remarkable and surprising experience of space, of a space discrete from the gallery space in which we stand. It is strangely exhilarating: we have no image of this space, yet we feel ourselves enveloped by it, contained within it—and it is a space that originates within ourselves.

In the paintings in this series, the horizontal lines do not signify *objects*, they are not signs for *things* in the space—as are, for example, the lines signifying walls and doors in *The Place of Saying*—but are *indices* of space only, of depth; they *indicate* space but do not configure it. And this experience of space is intensified by the tactile (indexical) sense of our bodies moving in actual space.

In *Paintings for Closed Eyes* the beholder's perception of space does not correspond to the usual experience of sighted persons. Although we *see* the marks on the canvas, we gain extremely fragmentary sense data thereby: we see only disconnected markers of depth and, hence, do not experience a spatial continuum, as is usual with the sense of sight. The world formed is akin to the "intermittent and thus fragmented world" of the blind, as John M. Hull has evocatively characterized it.⁵⁶ Like the blind, we do not *see* space but *perceive* it, forming it within ourselves.⁵⁷ And the activation of the tactile sense strengthens this kinship with blindness. Hull calls the blind person's sense experience of the world "whole body seeing": "the specialist function of sight is devolved upon the whole body, and no longer specialized in a particular organ."⁵⁸

The series *Paintings for Closed Eyes* marks a significant shift in Arakawa's work. The textual component has been reduced to a simple, easily understood command to the viewer, the indexical to a mere intimation of space.⁵⁹ And while the earlier paintings addressed primarily, if not exclusively, the sense of sight, the newer work engages both sight and touch. Arakawa's earlier strategy for tracking the "area of perception created, located, and demonstrated by the combining of languages" has evolved into a strategy of pursuing this same goal by the *combining of modes of*

sensing. This approach has found its fullest, most complex realization in his collaborations with Gins in sites of reversible destiny.

BEYOND THE FICTION OF PAINTING

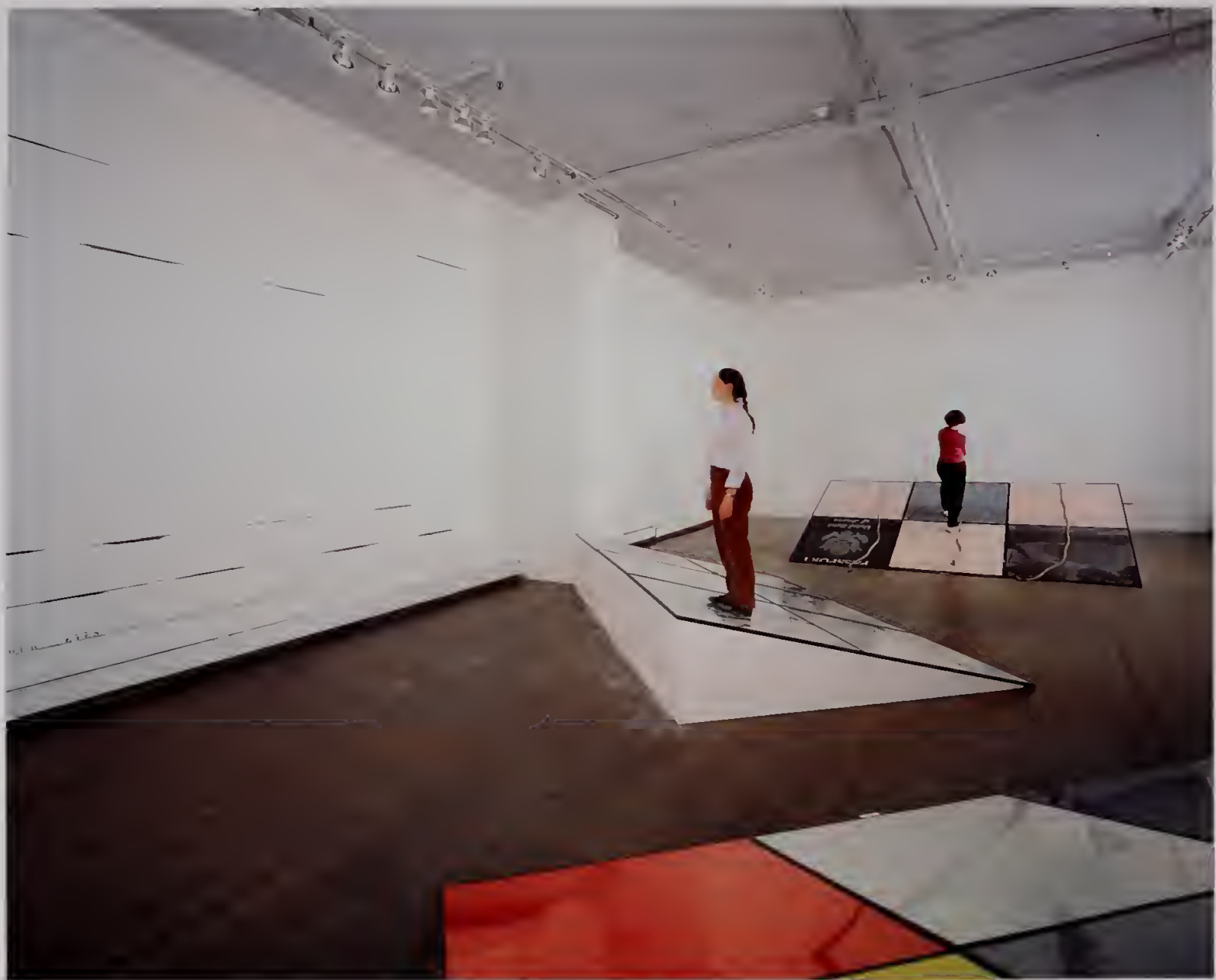
Architectural structures have always played a role in Arakawa's painting, as we have seen in *The Place of Saying* and *Alphabet Skin*. But along the way to sites of reversible destiny there have been a number of experiments and prototypes in three dimensions. In 1962–64, Arakawa constructed, out of diverse materials, a group of suspended structures titled *Bottomless I–III* (see pp. 38–40). And a number of models and actual structures realized in the 1980s anticipate the constructed *Site of Reversible Destiny–Yōro* and the development of prototypes for "reversible destiny housing" and "reversible destiny architecture," the most ambitious being *Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question*, a model for a "complete sensorium" on which Arakawa and Gins worked from 1973 to 1989.

Arakawa's cessation of painting at the end of the 1980s and his focus on architecture in the 1990s should be understood not merely as a change of medium, nor even primarily as a change of strategy in the continuing exploration of perception. It constitutes a radicalization of aims. The nature of this radicalization can be most easily understood through a closer examination of the concept of "landing sites."

The term "perceptual landing site" first appeared in the mid-1980s in a series of charts before it found a more precise and elaborate theoretical formulation. In the series *Perceptual Landing Sites* of 1981–85, Arakawa and Gins defined it as "any discerning that is to any degree locatable."⁶⁰ More recently, they have explained: "The concept of landing site is basically a heuristic device for mapping how a person forms the world and situates herself within it."⁶¹ In these charts, Arakawa and Gins designated the array of perceptual landing sites that occur when a person enters a symmetrical octagonal structure. A distinction is made between different types of perceptual landing sites: visual, tactile, aural, olfactory, kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, imaging (supplementing sense perception with the imagination), and locator-perceptual (for the establishing and maintaining of distance and the assessing of volume and distance). Locator-perceptual sites may occur as a result of some or all of the other forms of perceiving in combination.

In recent years, Arakawa and Gins have refined and simplified their original concept of landing sites, now dividing them into three basic categories: perceptual, imaging, and architectural.⁶² *Perceptual* landing sites, rather than encompassing all types of landing sites, are now restricted to sites of "direct perception," the apprehension through sensory means of what is physically there. This can encompass direct visual, tactile, aural, olfactory, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive perception. Perceptual landing sites may be environmental objects and phenomena (a chair, a cloud) or signs (for example, words, whether apprehended by visual, aural, or tactile means).⁶³

Every type of perceptual landing site has a corresponding type of *imaging* landing site. These "fill in the gaps between perceptual points or areas



Installation view of *Paintings for Closed Eyes*, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts,
New York, October–November 1990



Abrupt Resemblances, 1989-90

Diptych: acrylic and pencil on canvas, 132 x 90 inches each panel,
ramp: aluminum boards, photographs, plastic, plywood, and rope.

six panels, 48 x 48 inches each

Included in *Paintings for Closed Eyes*, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York,
October–November 1990

of focus," for "without them the world would be made mostly of holes." They are "those areas of a person's perceived world that exist without ever having been or currently being ascertained through direct perception." We do not have to be actually perceiving the whole or even a part of an object or of an environment to be conscious of it as a whole. "Every object is as much imaged as perceived, probably more imaged than perceived," wrote Arakawa and Gins.⁶⁴

For example, as I am writing this, I *see* only my computer screen, the objects behind it, and my hands, out of focus, at the lower periphery of my field of vision. I can *feel* my chair supporting my body, my feet resting on the floor, my fingers lightly touching the keyboard. But I am nevertheless cognizant of and can visualize the shape and color of the chair, my body seated on it, and the floor that supports both. Imaging landing sites, then, "fill in and finish the world."⁶⁵ The content of imaging landing sites is based on previous perception in the immediate or recent past, on perceptual memory imprint.

The third type, *architectural* landing sites, are what Arakawa and Gins earlier termed "locator-perceptual landing sites." They mark the perception of dimensions, spatial relations, and approximate location, the relative positions of perceiver and perceived: "The quickest way to get a sense of how architectural landing sites function in this context is to think of what happens when they are missing or insufficiently arrayed. Everyone has had the experience of feeling like an idiot when stubbing his toe. The necessary architectural landings sites were not in place."⁶⁶

As Arakawa and Gins have put it, the pronoun "I" is already an "architectural assertion," because it creates spatial relations, it establishes what they call "a fiction of place."⁶⁷ Arakawa and Gins have speculated that the architectural landing site "is probably a hybrid, in part a perceptual and in part an imaging landing site."⁶⁸ It seems to correspond to what James J. Gibson called the "basic orienting system."⁶⁹

Although Arakawa and Gins developed this explicit taxonomy of perception only within the past decade or so, they now regard it as universal, and so it is productive, in mapping the trajectory of their collaborative project, to reexamine Arakawa's paintings in these terms. As established, in many of his early paintings he strove to simulate the effect of sensory deprivation, to create a kind of parallel to blindness. In such works, the perceptual landing sites are spare and enigmatic; "gaps" must be filled by imaging landing sites. Architectural landing sites, though often subtle, are also very much a factor in these paintings. They exist not only in the relative positionality of the ingredients in *Sky no. 2* but also to the extent that they establish a positionality relative to the body of the beholder. The latter is particularly evident in the vertically hung floor plans of *The Place of Saying* and *Alphabet Skin*, and, more forcefully, in the series *Paintings for Closed Eyes*, which also dramatically incorporates tactile, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive landing sites.

By this time, the reader may well be asking, "Why this odd, ungainly appellation, 'landing site'? Why not 'locus of perception' or 'source of stimulation'?"⁷⁰ The former is certainly more felicitous, and it does seem

conceptually consistent with "landing site," at least with perceptual and architectural landing sites. Yet, even in its strangeness, the term "landing site," is more evocative of a transient microevent; something becomes a landing site only by virtue of its being landed upon, of its being registered by embodied consciousness, whereas "locus of perception" suggests a degree of fixity. "Source of stimulation," on the other hand, assumes a strict separation between perceiving subject and perceived object, whereas for Arakawa and Gins subject and object mutually mediate each other.⁷¹ The perceiving subject as subject is constituted by its own perceiving; in forming the world it forms itself.

This is not solipsism; it does not deny the existence of anything independent of an individual's own perceiving. Rather, what Arakawa and Gins are striving for, I believe, is to induce an intense experience of what the philosopher John Searle calls the "first-person ontology" of consciousness. Such an ontology recognizes that mental states "only exist as subjective, first-person phenomena." Accordingly, "all of my conscious forms of intentionality that give me information about the world independent of myself are always from a special point of view. The world itself has no point of view, but my access to the world through my conscious states is always perspectival, always from my point of view."⁷²

As Arakawa and Gins have declared: "You are not I. When you stand there and field the world as you, that is not my being in the world because you are not I."⁷³ However secure we may be in our knowledge that there is a physical reality that exists independently of our multiple subjectivities and their corresponding worlds, the only world any of us ever knows and experiences is the unique one that we, individually, have formed.

The purpose of the paintings, as well as the architectural projects, is to make the beholder conscious of this process, to experience these discrete landing sites as the stuff of which the world is formed, the world as experienced by a given person. And perceiving, the forming of the world, Arakawa and Gins insist, is the process through which a body becomes a person. "Having a body includes having a world, one of a particular kind. . . . The body, through its senses and its movements, configures the world or, more precisely, each body generates a person who originates, read co-originate, the world."⁷⁴

The extreme case of Helen Keller helped to sensitize Arakawa to the interdependence between body, person, and world. With her deprivation of sight and hearing, and the resultant drastic limitation of her possible perceptual landing sites, she inevitably formed a radically different world from that of most persons. It was in part through her example that Arakawa first began to contemplate creating "another ground, another surface on which to exist." In an interview with Hirako Akihiko, he explained the significance of this goal:

By creating a second horizon, or better yet many more, we can be released from the out-of-date moral values or obsolete structures of common sense that accumulate on the ground-surface we normally

exist on. We'd be truly free to develop potentially more fruitful and expansive moral values. Poets and philosophers have said much about the possibility of such a world. But theirs is a world of words and ideas, without shape or color or weight. Theirs is a fiction, no matter how wonderful. Painting turns out to be only such a fictional world, too.⁷⁵

Mark Taylor has summarized the project succinctly: "To reform perception is to transform the architecture of the I. Since the world is not merely given but is constructed by the activity of the subject, the recoding of the I is the recreation of the world."⁷⁶ Painting succeeded in heightening the attentive beholder's awareness of his own perceiving, but it proved a limited vehicle for achieving this ultimate goal. Why? A comparison of a painted Arakawa landscape with an actual, constructed one may help explain why.

Landscape (2), 1968, is typical of Arakawa's early painting and incorporates some of the features we have already discussed in paintings of the 1960s. Landing sites are indicated by dots and labeled by means of words and arrows; in two cases, they remain unnamed, accompanied by empty boxes, like those we encountered in *Sculpting no. 1*, perhaps signifying something unfamiliar or indeterminate among such familiar objects as a mountain, a tree, a cloud, and so forth. All but one of these labeled landing sites, "AIR," are perceivable through vision. Air can be perceived only through olfactory and proprioceptive senses, although evidence of it could be detected visually or aurally, as in rustling grass or foliage.

And what of those alternate "horizons" of which Arakawa spoke? The compound significations in the painting may be unconventional, but in all but two cases they can ultimately be formed into something familiar. Although the sighted may have shared the deaf-blind experience of forming a perception for which there was no sensory equivalent, of forming a world through language, they inevitably draw on their own vast store of visual memories and experiences and familiar "image schemata."⁷⁷ The baffling eventually becomes the familiar, even if we admittedly become acutely conscious of the perceptual process as a result. Arakawa and Gins have acknowledged, "Every person proceeds by continually turning the unfamiliar into the familiar," and that is what happens here. But what Arakawa and Gins now strive for is the subversion of "that habitual and deadening process."⁷⁸ Reversible destiny architecture is a more effective means to that end.

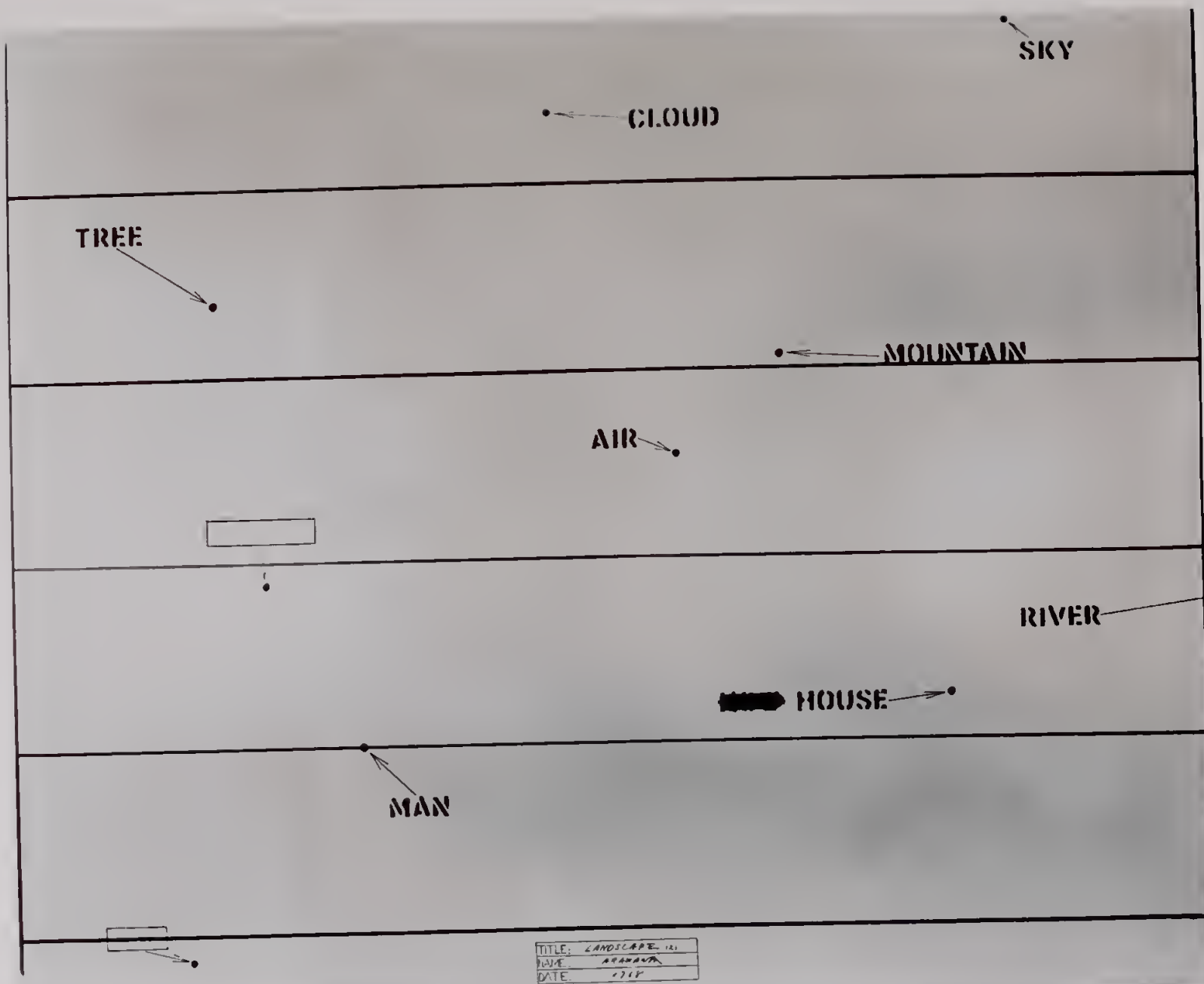
If the full perception of *Landscape (2)* required the decoding and coordination of different types of signs, and a heavy complement of imaging landing sites, much of *Site of Reversible Destiny-Yoro* at Gifu offers itself fully to the senses. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, the surrounding edge of the park and the terrain of its entire northeast extension, from *Exactitude Ridge* to *Critical Resemblances House*,⁷⁹ takes the form of urban street maps reminiscent of Arakawa's paintings of the 1960s and 1970s. Here, imaging landing sites remain dominant, but they are in conflict with other perceptual landing sites: as we amble down Park Avenue South on *Exactitude Ridge* we look beyond *Critical Resemblances House* to the city of Gifu and its

environs—this is a more sophisticated variant of the "SAY one THINK two" that we encountered in *The Mechanism of Meaning*. Needless to say, this conflict also generates some disorientation with regard to architectural landing sites. But more often the perceptual array at Yoro leaves less room for imaging landing sites because perception is too confused, too disoriented to be filled in. Entering *Critical Resemblances House*, the visitor becomes engaged in perceiving not a compound *sign* of an environment, but an environment itself—one designed to activate the entire body as a sensing organism—which relentlessly assaults perceptual habit and expectation. "Juggling, jumbling, and reshuffling the body with its fund of landing sites introduces a person to the process that constitutes being a person," Arakawa and Gins have declared. *Site of Reversible Destiny-Yoro* was constructed to put "surroundings forward in a manner so concentrated that they wax unfamiliar; and to have the body be so greatly and so persistently thrown off balance that the majority of its efforts have to go entirely towards the righting of itself, leaving no energy for the routine assembling of the socio-historical matrix of the familiar or, for that matter, for the 'being of a person.'"⁸⁰

Encountering reversible destiny architecture, we gradually form and configure a world out of unfamiliar sense data, out of blank. And while paintings, even large ones, tend to be relatively unassertive physical objects, passively awaiting a too-often jaded gaze, the structures of reversible destiny architecture assert themselves aggressively; we are physically coerced into interacting with them in a certain way, as they continually reconfigure our perceptions of our own bodies.

Reversible destiny architecture aims at the experience of what Arakawa and Gins called, in an earlier formulation, "blank perceiving." This most simply might be defined as perceiving that resists familiarization through existing image schemata. Here, again, the analogy with the experience of blindness arises—or, rather, with the experience of those who are congenitally blind and gain sight later in life. Such patients, Gins wrote, have "not yet constructed those sets of preconceptions making up visual memory imprint." She cited the account of Marius von Senden, who reported that during the period of their initial exposure to retinal images some patients behave "exactly as in learning the words of a foreign language"; objects with which they are familiar through touch are unrecognizable by sight.⁸¹ They cannot correlate these sense data with any sign system available to them; the visual world is a strange realm, as yet unarticulated by signification—it is blank, and their encounter with it is blank perceiving: "What would a hat be for you if you had never seen one before? Let every act of perceiving be unique to itself. With all the preconceptions gone, what could be left would be blank perceiving."⁸² This constitutes nothing less than an assault on a defining—and little understood—feature of human perception that allows us to function in the world as we know it. As Gibson has written:

The unanswered question of sense perception is how an observer, animal or human, can obtain constant perceptions in everyday life on the



Arakawa
Landscape (2), 1968
 Acrylic and pencil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches

basis of . . . continually changing sensations. . . . The active observer gets invariant perceptions despite varying sensations. He perceives a constant object by vision despite changing sensations of light; he perceives a constant object by feel despite changing sensations of pressure; he perceives the same source of sound despite changing sensations of loudness in his ears. The hypothesis is that constant perception depends on the ability of the individual to detect the invariants, and that he ordinarily pays no attention whatever to the flux of changing sensations.⁸⁴

It is precisely this constancy, these "invariant perceptions," that Arakawa and Gins wish to subvert, because what they call the "event-fabric of the world"⁸⁴ is woven from such invariants. This is why they also call *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro* the "Garden of the Self," not because it is a place for narcissistic contemplation, but because it is intended to reconstitute the self by reconfiguring its perceiving.⁸⁵

"Painting is only an exercise"—the significance of that statement becomes clearer in the face of reversible destiny architecture. But it is probably equally safe to say that these constructions are themselves ultimately only an exercise, not an end in themselves. Arakawa and Gins view their mediums as means to an end that transcends their respective discourses, that lies beyond the normal connotations of the "aesthetic." Their work is motivated neither by issues of form nor by issues of content and subject matter. Arakawa and Gins have worked and continue to work in what are often narrowly construed as aesthetic discourses because these mediums, in their concreteness, have proved the most effective for exploring fundamental issues that lie outside art and architecture, issues normally regarded as the province of philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science. Through their efforts, singly and collaboratively, painting and architecture have demonstrated a unique capacity to trap the unsignifiable, to stimulate within us processes and operations that are as yet little understood, as yet uncharted, but which nonetheless raise most insistently the ultimate philosophical question of what we are and what we can become.

Parts of this essay first appeared under the title "Looking at Arakawa," in *Constructing the Perceiver—Arakawa Experimental Works*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 1991), pp. 43–51 (Japanese), 313–22 (English). The subtitle of the present text is taken from the title of an Arakawa painting of 1961–62.

1. Carl Einstein, "Bebuquin," in Einstein, *Werke Band 1: 1907–1918*, 2nd rev. ed., ed. Hermann Hasamann and Klaus Siebenhaar (Berlin: Fannei & Wale, 1991), p. 101.
2. The most extensive publication on the project to date is *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro Arakawa + Madeline Gins: Architectural Experiments* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1995).
3. By "reversible destiny," Arakawa and Gins mean overcoming the ostensible inevitability of death. On this point, Arthur C. Danto wrote, "Gins explains to me that since we don't really understand body-mind, we don't really know that death is our destiny. The bridge [of reversible destiny], in bringing to awareness the nature of our nature, prepares us for immortality"; see Danto, "Gins and Arakawa: Building Sensoriums," *The Nation*, October 15, 1990, p. 131.
4. Howard Nemerov, *The Painter Dreaming in the Scholar's House* (New York: Phoenix Book Shop, 1968), unpaginated.
5. Arthur Danto, review of *The Mechanism of Meaning*, in *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 10, no. 4 (September–October 1979), p. 135; Jean-François Lyotard, "Longitude 180° W or E," in *Arakawa*, exh. cat. (Milan: Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, 1984), unpaginated, and Italo Calvino, "The Arrow in the Mind," *Artforum* 24 (September 1985), p. 115.
6. Armin Zweite, "Arakawa: Versuch einer Annäherung," in Zweite, *Arakawa: Bilder und Zeichnungen, 1962–1981*, exh. cat. (Munich: Stadische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, 1981), pp. 8–51.
7. Arakawa and Madeline Gins, "Testing the Limits," in *Arakawa*, exh. cat. (Brussels: Galerie Isy Brarhot, 1988), p. 5.
8. Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), pp. 157–58.
9. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds., *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Da Capo, 1989), p. 125. This must have seemed a heretical, strangely retrograde notion in 1947, when it was published in the bulletin of New York's Museum of Modern Art, an institution then firmly dedicated to the ideology of what Duchamp called the "retinal." Duchamp remarked to Pierre Cabanne: "Since Courbet, it's been believed that painting is addressed to the retina. That was everyone's error. The retinal shudder! Before, painting had other functions: it could be religious, philosophical, moral," see Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking, 1971), p. 43.
10. See Calvin Tompkins, *The Brute and the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant-Garde* (New York: Viking, 1965). Though not one of the artists discussed in Tompkins's book, Jasper Johns has also been interpreted in this way. Duchamp, however, did not acknowledge his affinity with these "bachelors." As late as 1960, he observed that, in spite of his own "antiretinal" efforts, nothing had changed: "Our whole century is completely retinal. It's absolutely ridiculous. It has to change, it hasn't always been like this"; see Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, p. 13.
11. By "perception" Arakawa and Gins mean not mere sensation but also the mental processing of it, making sense of our sensations. This is consistent with the definition of James G. Gibson, who makes a distinction between merely having a sensation and "detecting something." Accordingly, he differentiates "between the passive receptors that respond each to its appropriate form of energy, and the active perceptual organs, better called systems, that can search out the information in stimulus energy"; see Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 2. This is consistent with the first definition of "perceive" in *The Oxford English Dictionary*: "1. trans. To apprehend with the mind, to become aware or conscious of, to observe, understand."
12. Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), p. 16.
13. Arakawa, "Notes on My Paintings—What I Am Mistakenly Looking for," *Arts Magazine* 11, no. 2 (November 1969), p. 29. The text is taken from a painting of Arakawa's titled *Paintings*, 1968–69, reproduced in Zweite, "Arakawa: Versuch einer Annäherung," p. 36.
14. I refer here to three semiotic categories—icon, symbol, and index—of Charles Sanders Peirce. The icon signifies primarily by virtue of some resemblance to its object, by imitating some aspect or quality of it, and thereby exciting "analogous sensations in the mind for which it is a likeness." An illusionistic painting is an icon, but so are diagrams, maps, and other such configurations that signify by means of some shared quality with their object. A diagram is an icon not on the basis of any "sensuous resemblance between it and its object, but only an analogy between the parts of each." Symbols, on the other hand, signify on the basis of convention, rule, or code—all spoken and written languages are thus primarily symbolic signs. The index, the third category of sign, signifies not by means of resemblance to its object nor by rule or code, but by contiguity, by means of some actual, dynamic connection with its referent. Animal tracks, knocks on the door, fingerprints, weather vanes, brush strokes are all indices; they refer to the object they denote "by virtue of being really affected by that object." Similarly, an arrow is an index in that it establishes contiguity between two things, one thing becomes a sign of the other or directs the attention to it. See Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, eds., *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), 2:248, 278–81, 285–87, 292 (consistent with established practice in the Peirce literature, the numbers refer to paragraphs of this edition rather than to pages). Using Peirce's categories, one may say that in most of Arakawa's early paintings the "languages," or types of signs, that he combined were primarily indexical and symbolic. Icons are usually visualized rather than perceived directly; they are then the result of the coordination of indices and symbols by the beholder. Where icons are perceived directly they nearly always occur in the reductive, schematic form of maps or diagrams, leaving plenty of work for the imagination.
15. The term "interpretants" comes from Peirce; see *ibid.*, 2:228, 242.
16. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd ed., trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York:

- Macmillan, 1968), p. 50, par. 130. Arakawa became familiar with the work of Wittgenstein before 1961, while still in Japan, when he read parts of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; in 1964, he read the entire book for the first time. He did not read the *Philosophical Investigations* until around 1968 (Conversation with the artist, July 1991).
17. Arakawa, "On My Paintings," p. 29.
18. I borrow these terms from Roland Barthes's "Rhetoric of the Image," in Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 32–51.
19. Although it is widely known in its book format—see Arakawa and Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, new 3rd ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988)—this group of mixed-media works, absolutely central to the Arakawa and Gins project, has never been shown in the United States until the present exhibition. *The Mechanism of Meaning* is like an atlas of the mind/body operations activated by Arakawa's painting. More blatantly than the earlier paintings, this group of works demands the active participation of the beholder. Here one finds many of the strategies employed in the paintings of the 1960s and 1970s, but with a much broader range of mediums (many of the panels are assemblages).
20. Arakawa and Gins, untitled text, in *Shusaku Arakawa: Space as Intention*, exh. cat. (Nagoya: Gallery Takagi, 1983), p. 1.
21. Francis Crick, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul* (New York: Scribner's, 1994), pp. 208–09. Even Crick himself concedes, "It is not completely certain that the binding problem (as I have stated it) is a real one, or whether the brain gets around it by some unknown trick" (p. 208n).
22. I use the term "visual system" rather than "sense of sight" with deference to the distinction made by Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, pp. 47, 53–54.
23. Arakawa and Gins, "Testing the Limits," p. 5, and Arakawa and Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, p. 102.
24. However, that place, that "I," is no stable entity, but what Arakawa and Gins will later term a "fiction of place"—a "fiction" because in their view the perceiving I is configured and in part constituted at any given moment by its own perceiving, which is continually in flux. See Arakawa and Gins, "The Tentative Constructed Plan as Intervening Device (for a Reversible Destiny)," *A+U*, no. 255 (December 1991), p. 48 (hereafter referred to as "Tentative Constructed Plan").
25. Gins, *Helen Keller or Arakawa* (Santa Fe: Burning Books; New York: East West Cultural Studies, 1994).
26. See the letters and reports by Sullivan included in Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life*, ed. John Albert Macy (1902, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954), pp. 251–320.
27. Keller to Caroline Derby, October 23, 1894, in *ibid.*, pp. 180–81.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
29. Gins, *Helen Keller or Arakawa*, p. 181.
30. Keller, *The Story of My Life*, p. 229.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 337.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
33. Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 62.
34. *Untitled*, 1969, and *Shape no. 2*, 1969, illustrated in *Constructing the Perceiver—Arakawa: Experimental Works*, pp. 140, 145, respectively.
35. *Untitled* and *Sky (Lamb Stew)*, both 1968, illustrated in *ibid.*, pp. 133–34.
36. In the early days of her tutoring, Sullivan would reward Keller with cake when she learned a new word, see Keller, *The Story of My Life*, p. 255.
37. Gins, *Helen Keller or Arakawa*, p. 125.
38. *Ibid.* Gins uses this metaphor, p. 291.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
40. Arakawa and Gins, *Pour ne pas mourir/To Not to Die* (Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1987), p. 46.
41. Arakawa and Gins, "Tentative Constructed Plan," p. 49.
42. Arakawa first included the word in his painting *Untitled* of 1969, which consists only of the inscription in stenciled letters, "I have decided to leave this painting completely blank"; illustrated in *Constructing the Perceiver—Arakawa: Experimental Works*, p. 140. See also, for example, *Blank Model/Model Blank*, 1976, *Texture of Point Blank*, 1977, and *Blank Stations II*, 1981–82, illustrated in *ibid.*, pp. 173, 184, 184–85, respectively.
43. Dagmar Buchwald, in her translator's note to Gins, "Der Prozeß in Frage," in *Arakawa*, exh. cat. (Berlin: daadgalerie, 1990) p. 27n.
44. Arakawa and Gins have characterized blank as a "neutral positing—in the sense of holding open; it is what is there but undifferentiated, so it is not nothing. It is what fills emptiness"; see Arakawa and Gins, untitled text, in *Space as Intention*, p. 1.
45. As Gins explained in conversation with the author, August 5, 1991, what one might term their "theory" is their attempt to understand and conceptualize a given, namely, what happens in the perception of the work, after the fact—their attempt to draw from the experience generated by their work conclusions not about the work itself but about perception. Arakawa does not proceed according to a carefully constructed theoretical model, the work is always in advance of the theory. I have found that the "theoretical" texts become intelligible only in light of the experience of the work, when they take on the character of interpretive descriptions of the perceptual process.
46. There are some noteworthy similarities between "cleaving" or "forming blank" and Jacques Derrida's concept of the "trace." "The trace is in fact the absolute origin of sense in general. . . . The trace is the difference which opens appearance [*l'apparaître*] and signification. Articulating the living upon the nonliving—the trace is not more ideal than real, not more intelligible than sensible, not more a transparent signification than an opaque energy and no concept of metaphysics can describe it." See Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 65; see also p. 63 on *différance*. "Différance is . . . the formation of form."
47. Gins, "The Process in Question," unpublished manuscript of a paper presented at Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, February 1990, p. 12. The text has been published in German as "Der Prozeß in Frage," trans. Dagmar Buchwald, in the daadgalerie's *Arakawa*, pp. 9–42.
48. This text and a number of others used by Arakawa in his paintings are published in Arakawa and Gins, *Pour ne pas mourir/To Not to Die*.
49. Arakawa, "On My Paintings," p. 29.
50. See Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 118–25. I have taken the term from Iser, who applies it to the "synthesizing activity . . . that is fundamental to the grasping of a text." Iser's interest in analyzing the microactions of reading and comprehending a text has interesting parallels with Arakawa's explorations of the process of perception.
51. Gins, "The Process in Question," p. 1.
52. John Searle, whose *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), p. 97, has some relevance to the Arakawa and Gins project, holds that this is an impossibility; we cannot observe our own observing:
- If I try to observe the consciousness of another, what I observe is not his subjectivity but simply his conscious behavior, his structure, and the causal relations between structure and behavior. . . . Well, what about my own inner goings-on? Can I not observe those? The very fact of subjectivity, which we were trying to observe, makes such an observation impossible. Why? Because where conscious subjectivity is concerned, there is no distinction between the observation and the thing observed, between the perception and the object perceived. The model of vision works on the presupposition that there is a distinction between the perception and the object perceived. But for "introspection" there is simply no way to make this separation. Any introspection I have of my own conscious state is itself that conscious state. . . . the standard model of observation doesn't work for conscious subjectivity.
- With Arakawa's paintings, I would suggest, we are not observing our own perceiving as it happens; that is not our intention. Our attention is directed toward the painting, not toward our own perception of it. We become aware of the process only retroactively, by way of reflecting back on operations already completed.
53. Arakawa and Gins, "Testing the Limits," p. 5.
54. *Ibid.* Arakawa began this move toward formal simplicity in 1986, before he introduced platforms.
55. Hans Jonas, "The Nobility of Sight: A Study in the Phenomenology of the Senses," in Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 154. I am grateful to Peter Pezling for bringing Jonas's essay to my attention.
56. John M. Hull, *Touching the Rock: An Experience of Blindness* (New York: Pantheon, 1990), p. 29.
57. See Jonas, "The Nobility of Sight," p. 143:
- even the densest distribution of the point determinants collected and correlated in the course of extensive scanning by touch still leaves areas to be supplied by imagination. But however many data may be registered in succession and entered into the plane of simultaneous presentation, they can never fill a horizon such as is disclosed to one glance of the eyes. There are bound to remain blank spaces in between and an unrealized horizon in depth beyond the proximity of the actually contacted resistant objects. (emphasis added)
- The passage captures the effect of *Paintings for Closed Eyes*.
58. Hull, *Touching the Rock*, p. 217.
59. Although all language signifies symbolically (that is, by rule or code), there are nevertheless functions of language that are iconic or indexical, just as icons, for example, can serve symbolic functions (for example, allegorical figures). "Close your eyes" would be an indexical use of language according to Peirce. "Some indices are more or less detailed directions for what the hearer is to do in direct experiential or other connection with the thing meant"; see Hartshorne and Weiss, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 2:291.
60. See Charts 4 (T1) and 5 (T2), both titled "Detail of Perceptual Landing Sites," illustrated in *Constructing the Perceiver—Arakawa: Experimental Works*, p. 254. The charts are also reproduced, somewhat more legibly, in Arakawa and Gins, "Tentative Constructed Plan," pp. 38–41.
61. Arakawa and Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny* (London: Academy Editions, 1994), p. 19.
62. *Ibid.*
63. It is worth noting that here Arakawa and Gins differ from Gibson, who makes a strict distinction between coded and uncoded stimulus information, or what he calls "verbal meaning" and "perceptual meaning"; see Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, p. 244.
64. Arakawa and Gins, "Person as Site in Respect to a Tentative Constructed Plan," in Cynthia C. Davidson, ed., *Anywhere* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), p. 65 (hereafter referred to as "Person as Site").
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
67. Arakawa and Gins, "Tentative Constructed Plan," p. 48. On "fiction of place," see note 24 above.
68. Arakawa and Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny*, p. 21.
69. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, pp. 53, 59–74. As Gibson observes, "This system cooperates, in fact, with all the other perceptual systems [auditory, haptic, taste-smell, and visual] since it provides a frame of reference for them."
70. "Locus of perception" is how Mark C. Taylor defines a landing site in "Saving Not," an insightful discussion of the work of Arakawa and Gins in his *Notes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 107 (this essay also appears in the present volume, pp. 124–39). Gibson uses the term "sources of stimulation" in his *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, pp. 7–30.
71. I am indebted for this formulation to Theodore W. Adorno's "Zu Subjekt und Objekt," in Adorno, *Stichworte. Kritische Modelle 2* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969), p. 152. Adorno's essay has been translated into English as "Subject and Object," in Andrew Arato and Elke Gerhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978).

72. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, pp. 70, 95.
 73. Arakawa and Gins, "Person as Site," p. 58.
 74. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
 75. Interview with Hirako Akihiko, cited in Akihiko, ed., *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro Park, Gifu*, trans. D. Robson (Gifu: Gifu Prefecture Park and Nature Association, 1995), p. 12.
 76. Taylor, *Notes*, p. 108.
 77. I derive the term "image schemata" from Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 29. Johnson defines an image schema as "a recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience" (p. xiv). Image schemata "operate at one level of generality and abstraction above concrete, rich images. A schema consists of a small number of parts and relations, by virtue of which it can structure indefinitely many perceptions, images, and events. In sum, image schemata operate at a level of mental organization that falls between abstract propositional structures, on the one side, and particular concrete images on the other" (p. 29). Arakawa and Gins adopt Johnson's concept in their texts "Person as Site," pp. 60–61, and *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny*, p. 23.
 78. Arakawa and Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny*, p. 8.
 79. For aerial photographs and plan, see Akihiko, ed., *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro Park, Gifu*, pp. 3, 10–11.
 80. Arakawa and Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny*, pp. 8, 23.
 81. Gins, "The Process in Question," pp. 16–17.
 82. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
 83. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, p. 3.
 84. Arakawa and Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny*, pp. 19–20.
 85. See *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro* Arakawa + Madeline Gins: Architectural Experiments, p. 10.

Determining Body no. 3 1987–88
 Diptych: acrylic on canvas, 144 x 96 inches
 each panel; ramp: acrylic, photographs,
 Plexiglas, and plywood, three panels,
 48 x 48 inches each



EARLY WORKS

*These early works by Arolawa prefigure Arolawa and
Madeline Gins's current studies of the architectural body*





facing page

Arakawa

Bottomless I (SOCIOUS), 1962-63

Acrylic panel, cloth, mirror, steel, steel mesh, steel wire, string, and thread,
41 x 100 x 100 inches

above

Arakawa

Bottomless II (Communal Body), 1963

Acrylic panel, cloth, mirror, steel, steel mesh, steel wire, string, and thread,
41 x 98 x 98 inches



Arakawa

Bottomless III (Communal Body), 1963–64

Cloth, felt, mirror, steel, steel mesh, steel wire, string, and thread,
43 x 144 x 124 inches



Arakawa
Untitled 1960-61
Pencil on canvas, 48 x 72 inches

To Think, To Invent, To Be Invented

Reflections on *The Mechanism of Meaning*

F L RUSH

To become different subjects, indeed different beings; to call down fate in order to remake it as art—this is the stated project of Arakawa and Madeline Gins. In order to effect this transformation, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, 1963–73, 1996 (see pp. 54–111), tacitly appeals to a constellation of views concerning the nature of meaning that may be characterized in broad stroke as “holistic” or as entailments of a holist view concerning meaning. But far from resting with a holist *description* of meaning, *The Mechanism of Meaning* radicalizes and extends such an account normatively in ways that holist accounts standardly do not anticipate. The work submits for our consideration, indeed, asserts the radical proposal that even our most fundamental and firmly held concepts and beliefs (among them, whatever beliefs underwrite our current understanding of what seem to be the unchangeable features of our conceptual interactions with the world) are de facto subject to revision and, indeed, *ought* be revised according to certain aims. Even more exceptional is the claim of Arakawa and Gins about the way in which we alter our conceptual and perceptual structures. The claim is that we reorder our conceptual and perceptual apparatus, at least in part, by recorrelating our physical interactions with the world; the presupposition is that there is such a close causal relationship between concepts and bodily states and dispositions to behave that changes in physical interactions will be changes in conceptual structure. This is a radical thesis, made no less so by the expressly antireductionist stance that Arakawa and Gins take with respect to the relationship of the mental and the physical.

In what follows, I shall be concerned to make explicit some of the theoretical presuppositions that underwrite *The Mechanism of Meaning* and situate them against a background of philosophical developments in the theory of meaning. In doing so, it is important to be aware that the work of Arakawa and Gins on these issues dates back to the early 1960s, a time predating or, in some cases, concurrent with many of the philosophical treatments of the concerns I will be discussing. Accordingly, the work of Arakawa and Gins should be seen as complementary to these philosophical developments and not simply reliant upon them. The work of Arakawa and Gins stands as arguably the earliest, and is certainly the most sustained, artistic meditation on “meaning,” as that term has been explicated in contemporary philosophical discourse.¹

THEORETICAL COMMITMENTS

The fundamental task of any theory of meaning, as Paul Grice has put it,² is to account for what makes some physical objects or events—for instance, spoken words or written signs—essentially different from other physical phenomena, such as the sound of thunder or a train whistle. No purely physical fact can possess a significance that is the product of an intent that it be recognized as the product of that intent—which is to say, no purely physical fact can possess “meaning” in the sense essential to communication and thought.

Beyond accepting this baseline desideratum for any theory of meaning, accounts vary as to the question of what constitutes the normative framework within which language functions. In general, two schools of thought have developed in this century on this issue. One group of thinkers holds to the traditional view that meaning is conferred on utterances and inscriptions by an individual speaker’s meaning or intent: let us call this group the “atomists.” Atomism so-defined includes among its ranks thinkers as diverse as Michael Dummett and Jerry Fodor. Atomism is compatible with either one of two views about what sort of linguistic item may be said to be the ultimate bearer of meaning. One possibility is that words or singular terms are linguistically self-sufficient items. The view that terms have meaning abstracted from any more general linguistic context is one dating back at least to Locke in the seventeenth century. It is almost universally rejected now as a general account of meaning, in favor of the so-called “compositional” conception of meaning, developed by the logician Gottlob Frege, who argued that sentences are the smallest unit of linguistic significance—that the meanings of words within a sentence are a function of their semantic roles in the sentence. Directly opposed to atomism, holism in the theory of meaning holds that the meanings of terms or concepts depend on the entire language or theory in which they are situated. To the extent that holism is seen simply as the view that signs derive their meanings from their roles in the language or signifiatory system as a whole, holism is, like Frege’s account of meaning, compositional; holism is but an extension of the relevant compositional context from sentence to the entire language.

Now, meaning holism has developed in two quite different ways in contemporary philosophy of language, both in reaction to neo-Kantian

views on the nature and function of language. One line of descent can be traced to Willard Van Orman Quine's radical empiricist critique of logical positivism (primarily that of Rudolf Carnap).² Quine argued that a thoroughgoing empiricism must have four interconnected results that are at odds with commonly held views about the nature of theories, systems, or languages (any systematic body of sentences). First, terms and sentences can only have meaning when considered in the context of the theory or language as a whole.³ Second, no one concept or term in any theory (or any specifiable class of such terms or concepts) is immune to revision through testing of hypotheses. This includes even those concepts, sentences, and beliefs that we hold to be the most central to our thought of the world (and hold to be inviolable because of their centrality); even the fundamental laws of logic are not sacrosanct.⁴ Third, there is no one way to map any given body of evidence, including the totality of evidence. That is, ways to conceive the world—our theories of it—are radically underdetermined by evidence. Thus, while truth *in* a theory or language is a question internal to the semantic rules internal to the theory, the truth *of* a theory is a solely pragmatic concern.⁵ There is no rule or set of rules neutral to all theories by which we can adjudicate the truest one. Fourth, since there is no one way in which the world must be taken (there are many equally good rival theories of it) and because the meanings of terms in any one of those theories will be "theory bound" in the sense that they are functions of their theoretical roles, there will be no pregiven mapping of the meanings of terms in one language to those in another. This last point is but a gloss of Quine's classic account of the indeterminacy of translation.⁶ When the evidence is a target language or behavior to be interpreted, that language can be translated in any number of ways compatible with a systematically coherent rendering of its meanings. This last point is extended into the theory of meaning proper by Donald Davidson's account of radical interpretation, in which meaning in general is understood on the model of the field linguist encountering verbal behavior with the only tools of interpretation available to him or her—tools relative to his or her own language.⁷ Importing this model to speakers of the "same" language, we arrive at the view that we each speak an idiolect that is only different in degree from what we consider to be foreign languages.

The view that linguistic meaning is holistic is a natural complement to yet another set of views about meaning that has been hugely influential and to which I have implicitly made reference already—the views that meaning is a function of social context and the product of linguistic communities. It is easy to see why one set of views suggests the other. If we view meaning holistically—and thus view the relevant constitutive matrix for meaning to be a language or theory as a whole—the idea that meaning is at least partially constituted by what Ludwig Wittgenstein called "forms of life" follows from the recognition that languages are spoken by communities of persons who share certain behaviors and concepts.⁸ Historically, recognition of the public nature of language has been dictated by the necessity of accounting for the normativity of language. Use

(and misuse) of language (more generally, the very capacity to follow a rule) requires that we accord the public nature of language a primitive status and not view it as something to be explained by adverting to private meaningful mental states. Although it is not altogether clear that Wittgenstein advocated as strong a constitutive role for the social as is sometimes argued for him, such an approach is characteristic of those sections of the *Philosophical Investigations* that address the problem of rule-following and the impossibility of a private language. Although the recognition that linguistic meaning can only be explained if we begin with the notion that language is transcendental to a speaker's individual meaning is often identified with the "linguistic turn" in early twentieth-century philosophy, the "primacy of the public" has been a prominent feature of reflection on the nature of language since its modern inception in the time of Herder.

Now, one possible outcome of holist accounts of meaning that accords linguistic groups primary normative force is that different languages may be thought to reflect "conceptual schemes," systems of thought that are so different they confer meanings on their terms that are unique to each system and that are both untranslatable and incapable of being fully comprehended by the linguistic occupants of other schemes. That is, given that translation between languages is always indeterminate and always proceeds from the perspective of a "home scheme," it might be argued that the final deliverance of Quine's revolution is a view of languages and systems of thought that are incommensurate. This possibility received quite a bit of attention in literature devoted to the meaning of scientific terms, and the notion that theories and languages are hermetically sealed systems of thought was, for a time, a powerful way to conceive not only of language but of symbolic practices in "foreign" cultures.⁹

Obviously, the idea that, in principle, conceptual schemes could be immune to translation endangers any understanding of meaning on a general Quinean model, since it is a central task of a theory of meaning that it account for how communication is possible. The theoretical device deployed by the Quinean to account for meaning is translation: the very idea that incommensurability attacks. But the incommensurability hypothesis had its own problems and can be shown wanting on several accounts. One problem with the view—which generally affects any relativistic thesis that parades itself as an assertion—is that the relativistic claim cannot be asserted except from within a particular conceptual framework and thus cannot aspire to be a global statement. Another problem is that incommensurabilists tend to expect altogether too much from translation, seeming to equate that activity with getting a "perfect read" on a culture as if one were a member of it. But most important, as Davidson demonstrates, the view that there are discrete conceptual schemes rests on an untenable dualism between the form of cognition or language (what we bring to our interactions with nature) and the object of that cognition, that is, a dualism between scheme and content.¹⁰ Put succinctly, there can be no viable distinction between scheme and content (and hence no fundamental problem about the incommensurability of

languages and no real sense to the notion of a conceptual scheme) because what it is to be an object of a concept is always already a function of interpretation. Interpretation, so to speak, goes "all the way down"; there is no sense to the notion of a prescriptive object of thought.¹²

Let us now turn to the second sort of reaction to neo-Kantian views on meaning—a reaction, centered in France, that radicalized received structuralist views on the purported systematic nature of language. Structuralism itself rests on holist views of language, but does not exhibit Quinean and Davidsonian modesty about the systematicity of a theory or language, nor does it incorporate a viable theory of reference. Because of largely phenomenological presuppositions regarding the philosophical appropriateness of an inclusion of reference into a theory of meaning, what has come to be known as "structural linguistics," based on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, methodologically treats conceptual systems as self-contained artifacts, held together by the coherence of the set of their member terms. In broad stroke, structuralists argued holistically that it is the position of the sign in a structure that determines the meaning of the sign. Thus, it is argued, a sign's meaning depends on the sign's *not* meaning everything or anything else in the system. That is, the difference between a sign and other signs or groups of signs in a particular system is constitutive of the meaning of a sign and determines what it means to be in a particular place in the system. Being in a particular place in a system is precisely being related meaningfully to other signs in terms of their differences.¹³ Accordingly, the structuralist is set upon the idea (often attributed to Leibniz) that all signs carry with them what we might call a "meaning penumbra," consisting in the meanings of all signs not the sign in question, but as related to the sign in question.

Let us see more particularly what this view of the constitution of meanings entails in the theory of meaning. Differences are what a sign is not, but, as a feature of the structuralist view on meaning, they must be part of the sign—what Jacques Derrida called "traces." But, if a sign can only mean in terms of its difference with other signs that, in turn, also mean only in terms of their differences, we are presented with a problem. What is a difference a difference *of*, on this account, except other differences? The very idea of difference presupposes some notion of fixity, otherwise it makes no sense to say that one thing is different from another. In other words, though signs are said to be constituted solely by their difference from other signs in a system, we must presuppose the idea of a sign that is not so constituted in order to get a system of differences in place. We are left with no center to the system other than the idea of structure. The notion of sign as a mere placeholder, or variable, disappears since the place it holds is merely a concatenation of differences: essentially a nonplace. This picture of language (outfitted with requisite Heideggerian trappings) was a staple of the approach to questions of meaning taken by the group of theorists, led by Derrida, that organized themselves around the publication *Tel Quel*. But it is important to note that this post-structuralist understanding of meaning renders problematic the very

notion of a closed system so important to structuralist conceptions of language. The very idea of a language composed of such entities—ones with no positive semantic properties—is untenable, and the very idea of a language (rather than just a contingent coordination of intersecting idiolects) becomes suspect.

COGNITIVE TRANSFORMATION

The Mechanism of Meaning joins a decidedly poststructuralist, post-Quinean/Davidsonian understanding of meaning with a radical conception of the possibility of art to change human nature. Gins and Arakawa embrace the notion that no system of meaning can be closed or stable and that the truth of any one way of taking the world cannot be canonically established. Conceptual schemes, theories, ways to take the world are one and all fungible, depending on our perceived purposes, desires, and prejudices. Even those cognitive structures that we now consider so fundamental to our way of thinking (in fact, to any way of thinking) are potentially subject to change or even overthrow; even the structure of perceptual awareness, often considered the archetypical case of cognitive passivity, may be the subject of our conceptual intervention.¹⁴ And, since Arakawa and Gins also accept that mental states are embodied and their content a result of this embodiment, plasticity of mind means plasticity of body. Both the mental and the physical structure of the brain upon which mental states supervene are, as far as we can tell, completely malleable.

The Mechanism of Meaning is intended to shape our cognitive apparatus (what Arakawa and Gins call "mind-brain") or, if this is too strong, is intended to suggest ways in which our cognitive apparatus might be reconfigured—might be liberated from the tyranny of "given" modes of thought. Part of the restructuring must be accomplished by localizing and selecting modes of social mediation of subjectivity. However, such communal influence must not be accepted uncritically. Inescapable as societal mediation of meaning and life may be, it is the cognitive responsibility of members of the community to challenge received modes of thought, to accept them, if we accept them at all, critically. My invocation of the term "critique" may seem somewhat out of place in a discussion of this work, illicitly recalling an Enlightenment model of reflection that does not claim to have the transformative power Arakawa and Gins insist upon. But the function of critical intelligence need not be limited to this conception. And the notion of critique, I would argue, can and must continue to play a significant role in any thought in which theory and praxis are conceived as being intimately connected. On this expanded model of criticism, the project of Arakawa and Gins qualifies as critique in the best Kantian/Hegelian sense, that is, as self-critique. Because we are all mechanisms of meaning, we become self-aware while doing the exercises contained in the panels comprising the work, and in a very real sense, we create ourselves anew.

The fact that it requires us to assume a critical posture does not mean, however, that *The Mechanism of Meaning* is correctly understood as a series of arguments. This approach to the work—one taken by many to works

that might be loosely termed “conceptual art”—risks submerging the ineliminable artistic nature of the work. The exercises in the various subdivisions call upon us to experience being mechanisms of meaning in ways that the experience of arguments (even good ones) cannot penetrate. For instance, many of the panels require physical interaction. Some panels appeal to changes in “mood” and others to our sense of humor. Although arguments can be funny or ironic, can anger or elate us, their force as arguments does not rest on such effects. Rather than proving a hypothesis about the plasticity of mental states, Arakawa and Gins are after ways of experiencing actual changes, and it is their view that art has an essential role to play in bringing about this shift in self-understanding.¹⁵

WHY ART?

Perhaps we should pause to take a closer look at the claimed essential role for art in the reflection on the nature of meaning—a role, after all, that is generally thought to lie more in the province of philosophy. No dispute is more ancient, nor more tendentious, than that of the relationship of art to philosophy. Since the time of Aristophanes and Plato, art and philosophy have competed for the intellectual and spiritual currency of the age, each claiming a superiority for itself and its methodology. However, any conception of the nature of the relationship of art to philosophy as one that resides in essentially differing, even conflicting, methodologies particular to each approach is imperfect in at least two crucial aspects: First, this formulation assumes that art and philosophy reflect on the world in ways that are exclusively native to each endeavor. But the idea that the pursuits of the philosopher and the artist are so dissimilar that their activities would involve commitments to divergent ways of investigating and representing the world is questionable. Indeed, one might say, at least in light of the present philosophical and literary culture, that such a view of the relation of art to philosophy is positively retrograde. Nonetheless, the attitude in philosophical circles that there is, crudely speaking, a methodology native to philosophy that artistic endeavor rarely, if ever, approximates remains a commonplace. Second, the view—an almost certainly false view—that philosophy as such and art-making as such have differing methodologies requires that we treat both philosophy and the production of art objects as fields over which we can specify univocal methodological standards.

Even in the face of admonitions against quick and easy bifurcation of art-making and philosophizing, one is still apt to insist that the approach of the artist to representation and expression, especially involving something like the question of meaning, cannot be entirely isomorphic with that of philosophy. Indeed, the insistence of Arakawa and Gins that their constructions are uniquely suited to revealing the nature of meaning trades upon the idea that there is at least something that their art can do that philosophical analysis (at least, philosophical analysis in its present state) cannot. So, while it is no doubt generally true that there are de facto differences in artistic and philosophical approaches, such an admission need not be accompanied by the view that artistic treatment of an

issue that has been dealt with philosophically in a deep way is inherently suspect. But questions remain: even if we accept that art can contribute to an understanding of the issue of meaning, (1) what is it about art that makes it especially suited to such an analysis, and (2) what does the fact (if it is a fact) that art of a certain type can contribute to an understanding of the nature of meaning in ways not currently open to philosophy say about the nature of meaning?

The key to seeing Arakawa and Gins’s answer to both these questions is the notion that meaning-conferring activity is constructive activity. As we have seen, on the holistic account, meanings mean in virtue of structure—a structure that is fungible between cultures and languages, one which is constantly changing and one in which revision can occur, at least in principle, at any level. How do such structures arise? How do they change? In short, how do they subsist? Regardless of what view one has about the fundamental generating force responsible for the structure in question—whether it be a matter of social and historical constitution or one in which individuals can institute changes immediately—some appeal must be made to the idea that meaning-conferring structures are constructions, that they are not just given, so to speak, as a fact of being biological organisms in environments (although the fact that we relate to environments in nonconceptual ways and how we so relate to the environment may prove quite important to an understanding of meaning). Now, though it is certainly the case that philosophical arguments and reflections may change the world—or at least the view of the world taken by individuals who are both convinced by the argument and act on the basis of the truths the argument in question is thought to deliver up—the idea that by being convinced of the correctness of a philosophical account we are also constructing meaning is one that does not ordinarily play much of a role in philosophy, at least not in a philosophical tradition still wary of Hegel.

In contrast, even if our views on artistic production have forever left behind the rich and varied legacy offered by the notion of genius as the essence of a successful production (and product), it is still the case, I wager, that we view art-making as a paradigm case of construction and, by implication, of meaning-conferral. For even though what Walter Benjamin famously referred to as the “aura” of artworks (indeed, of the world, in his estimation) has been trounced into nothingness, art is still made, that is, is recognized as a category of things, even though it may be part of that categorization that the mere “thingness” of such work is their theme.¹⁶

The unique way in which *The Mechanism of Meaning* takes its place among the works we situate in the art world is that it reflects upon meaning and is, at the same time, in virtue of this reflection, a vehicle for meaning-change. As a construction, the work consists in exercises. The term “exercises” here is no throwaway. The work is envisioned as an invitation for interaction in a series of exercises, each of which, in a different way, is supposed to reveal to us, the participants, how meaning happens. And it is supposed to reveal this through our doing the work. The collab-

orative aspect, implied in almost any artwork worth contemplation, is here expressed and an irreducible element in the work. In fact, if it is permissible to speak this way at all, collaboration is its essence. *The Mechanism of Meaning* is a "meaning-full" construction that constructs an analysis of meaning by inciting us to construct meanings along the lines of the exercises. *What* is constructed here is meaning. *Who* is doing the constructing is us. *What* the construction is about is ourselves constructing ourselves as sites for meaning, that is, as meaning-initiators and receptors. It is the contention of Arakawa and Gins that the work's contribution to an understanding of meaning, a contribution that art may be presently in a better position to make than philosophy, is to reveal meaning as invention through self-invention. And to those who would say that that is all very well and good but has little to do with the current debate on the nature of meaning, Arakawa and Gins would quite probably urge that the terms of the debate should be broadened.

Another factor puts art in a somewhat advantaged state in the reflection on meaning. As mentioned above, it is Arakawa and Gins's conviction and hope that reflection on the nature of meaning prompts changes in that nature. The importance of the concept of construction (that is, of self-construction) is fundamental in this regard. As a practical matter, how is this change to take place? Arakawa and Gins make use of a wide repertoire of tropes, puns, riddles, and gambits to incite us, many of which are "philosophical" in a relatively straightforward sense. But some of the incitements to change, particularly ones contained in *The Mechanism of Meaning*, do not conform to an argumentative structure.

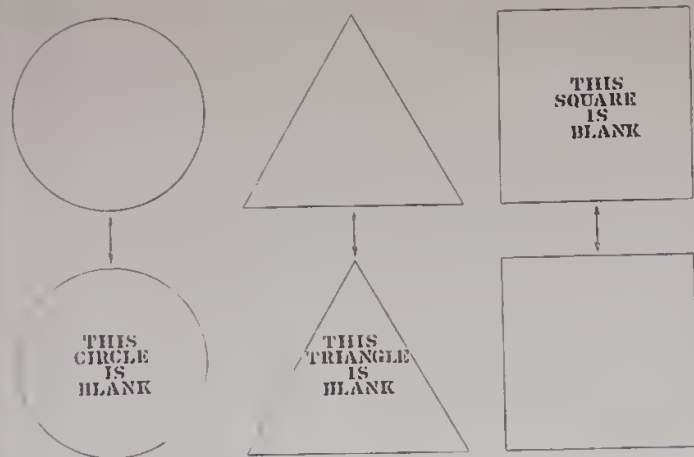
Art has a recent history of attempting wholesale change that philosophy for the most part lacks—and here I am speaking of Dada and, to a lesser extent, Surrealism.¹⁷ For the most part, Dada identifies the object to be changed as a certain attitude toward what can count as art. This is a special instance of meaning-change, involving a limited sphere of art-historical and ontological concepts, and thus lacks the global ambition of Arakawa and Gins's work. And to the extent that their work points to and recommends a future cognitive life discernibly better than the one we now lead, there is a utopian element to their work that is altogether lacking in Dada. Nevertheless, several of the techniques intended to induce meaning-change find their antecedents in Dada. For instance, one should not overlook the great extent to which Arakawa and Gins rely on humor, and further, on the humor inherent in nonsense, as a transformative element. Humor generally operates to a large degree at the expense of our cognitive expectations, and the artists' use of humor exploits this disruptive effect. But humor and its displacement-effect is but one example of a family of like tropes that are deployed in order to shatter our conceptual vessels *tout à coup*.

SOME APPLICATIONS

Since the way we are to reconfigure our mind-brain is by doing the exercises in *The Mechanism of Meaning*, it is important to consider what the work's structure holds for the participant. This can by no means be defin-

itively ascertained; the very nature of the work weighs heavily against discovering or attempting to establish definitive purposes for the exercises, the panels they comprise, or the subdivisions of the work. Nevertheless, certain general observations are possible: The work is divided into sixteen subdivisions. Of the sixteen, it seems to me that the first, *1. Neutralization of Subjectivity*, occupies a special place. *1. Neutralization of Subjectivity* is a clearinghouse for the mind; it is an attempt to neutralize accepted or received modes of interaction with the world in order that we be readied for the task of restructuring those modes. Though there is in the work an ongoing dialogue with Zen Buddhist conceptions of cancellation of subjectivity,¹⁸ neutralization of subjectivity need not, it seems to me, entail a renunciation of subjectivity in general, just an attempted clearing of generally accepted ways that we as subjects react and interact with the environment. Methodologically, there is a sense in which the neutralization of subjectivity is no different than Edmund Husserl's (or academic scepticism's) conception of the suspension of judgment, or *epochē*; we put modes of subjectivity out of the analysis for purposes of the exercises, neither affirming nor denying particular ways of taking the world as having ultimate validity.¹⁹ To be neutralized is to suspend belief about the veracity of any conception of subjectivity we might have brought with us to the work. The activity of neutralization of subjectivity is a condition precedent to gainful participation in the other exercises.

The next fifteen subdivisions elicit responses and invite conceptual and perceptual reconfiguration in a variety of ways and can be entered in any order. Each attempts to present a feature of cognitive awareness for our contemplation by having us perform basic activities associated with attention, perception, and description. For instance, in the third panel (see p. 59, fig. 2.3; detail, p. 48) of subdivision *2. Localization and Transference*, we find an exercise in which three geometrically identical pairs of two-dimensional figures are positioned one set directly above the other. Printed inside the first two figures of the lower row—from left to right, a circle and triangle—we find the statements "THIS CIRCLE IS BLANK," and "THIS TRIANGLE IS BLANK," while a similar statement, this time referring to the square, is printed in the square occupying the top row. This is a meditation on the cognitive activity of designation and that of construing something as without designation (that is, as blank). Each geometric figure is paired with one lacking the statement concerning being blank and thus, in the sense that it is lacking the statement, is blank. But each figure that contains a written statement is also designated as a blank by that very statement, though, in the sense that it contains something, it cannot be blank. But matters are made even more complex because each pair of figures is "connected" by bidirectional arrows, raising the question of whether the statement within a figure is actually meant to ascribe the property of being blank to the opposing figure. This seems the most inviting interpretation of each set of figures since we now have it being said of seemingly blank figures (that is, those without writing in them) that they are indeed blank. But taking the arrows between the figures to designate a relation of ascription or designation is only apparently the most satisfac-



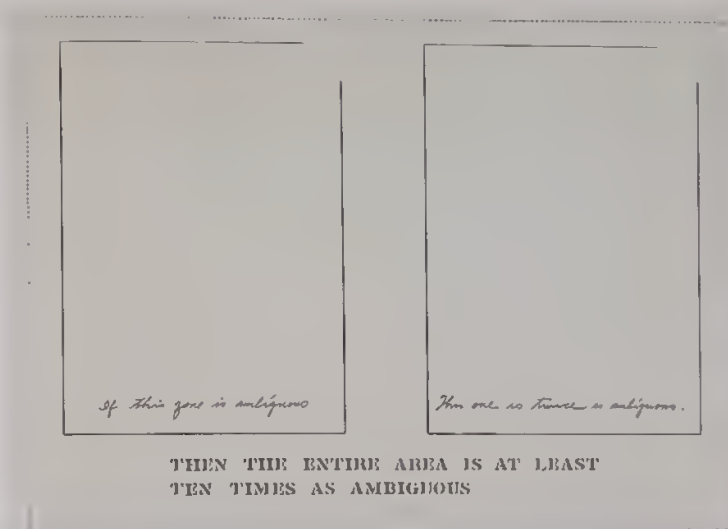
The Mechanism of Meaning, 2. Localization and Transference panel 3 (detail)

tory interpretation if the arrows are unidirectional, proceeding from statement to referent. As stated, however, the arrows are bidirectional, meaning that the figures without writing are also to be taken in some sense to refer to the blankness of the other figures and perhaps themselves. Refer how? One might ask, do they perhaps refer by exemplifying rather than stating the property in question? This mind-bender, nothing but a meditation on the concept of designation, demonstrates that the relation is dependent on localizing one sense of the relation between the figures. Such an exercise calls for us to contemplate coeval possibilities. In 2. *Localization and Transference*, we are made aware that any locality within a structure focuses meaning by making meaning-conferring entailments between other localities more or less remote. Shifts in locality shift meaning (or degrees of it). That is, the significance of any sign is a function of its limitation by localization. Moreover, any localization presupposes transference of other signs and their localities. Shifts in locality summon new contexts for meaning and show the context-flux of interpretative activity. Since structures are nothing but a sum of localities, shifts in locality can adumbrate the general fungibility of structure.

Let me turn now to the subdivision 3. *Presentation of Ambiguous Zones*. These exercises and panels present the fact that every meaning (even that of ambiguity) is in a crucial sense ambiguous. While only thematically present when meaning is reflectively considered, ambiguity is, nevertheless, necessary for any instance of meaning. Ambiguity—the zone of alternate possibilities, relative to a purported actuality—is what calls our attention to the interstices of meaning, what systematically eludes comprehension. In its way sublime, ambiguity is what Arakawa and Gins refer to as “blank.” The first exercise in the opening panel (see p. 61, fig. 3.1) of this subdivision consists of the following thought-experiment. Two rectangles, again geometrically identical, sit side by side. The upper

right corner of each seems to have been erased, although a faint remnant of the preexisting line describing the enclosure is apparent on closer inspection. In the rectangle on the left is the sentence fragment, “If this zone is ambiguous,” which is continued in the other rectangle as, “This one is twice as ambiguous.” Printed under both figures is the statement “THEN THE ENTIRE AREA IS AT LEAST TEN TIMES AS AMBIGUOUS.” The entire area of the rectangles and the caption beneath them is, in turn, enclosed in a larger single rectangle whose perimeter is described by a dotted line. Now, the semantic concept “ambiguity” is generally taken to have the following feature: something is ambiguous because two or more fairly settled meanings can be equally offered for it. Ambiguity presupposes that multiple possible interpretations of one and the same word, phrase, or event are available, and we consult context in order to settle on which interpretation is correct.²⁰ In the case before us, it is ambiguous whether we are dealing with zones at all. In order to be considered a zone, a thing must have area and no geometric figure can have an area unless it is a closed figure. But whether these are closed figures or not is ambiguous. We have an erasure, not merely the absence of closure. There was once a line, now either (1) there is not a line or (2) there is a faint line. All this amounts to the fact that what we have before us is the simultaneous representation of zone and nonzone.

Arakawa and Gins further play on the notion of ambiguity by offering the possibility that ambiguity might admit of quantitative distinction by the statement that “if this zone is ambiguous” “this one is twice as ambiguous.” The idea that one thing is more obscure or more confused than another is not remarkable; the concept of ambiguity does not admit of degrees in this sense. More particularly, ambiguity is not a quantitatively degreed concept; it makes no sense to say that one thing is twice as ambiguous as another, since ambiguity is a state in which more than one interpretation of a thing is possible and a decision between interpretations is problematic. Ambiguity does not increase if there are three rather than two rival interpretations, although disentangling the ambiguity may involve more conceptual work in the former instance (but that is not really clear). And it certainly is the case that saying that one zone is twice as ambiguous as another invokes a precise mathematical operation (multiplication) in the service of a concept that involves imprecision of meaning. This tension between measurement, zone, and ambiguity is brought home in the caption appearing under both zones: “THEN THE ENTIRE AREA IS AT LEAST TEN TIMES AS AMBIGUOUS.” Read as a continuation of the statement appearing inside the two zones, the caption intensifies the sense in which, taken together, the writing in the panel constitutes a “formula,” thereby deepening the conflict between the notion of the definite and the indefinite (although the final bit of the formula, as I am calling it, contains a qualification of just how many times more ambiguous the outer zone is than the inner ones. Moreover, it is not clear from the final rider to the formula whether the outer zone is ten times more ambiguous than the left zone, right zone, or both zones (or, if they are not zones correctly so-called, ten times more ambiguous than nothing). All of this is



The Mechanism of Meaning, 3. Presentation of Ambiguous Zones, panel 1 (detail)

further complicated by the fact that the dotted line describing the outside rectangle again puts in question its integrity as a zone. In short, the exercise investigates the dialectical interrelation of determination and ambiguity by making us constantly play one off against the other.

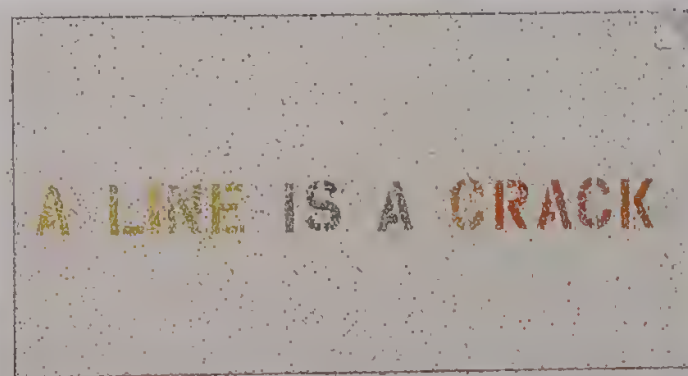
Of particular importance to understanding the theory of meaning that forms the background for *The Mechanism of Meaning* are the two subdivisions 7. *Splitting of Meaning* and 8. *Reassembling*, in which the exercises specifically rely upon the view that meaning is a product of an endogenous sundering, a marking-off, a splitting and rejoining, of what Arakawa and Gins wittily term a “cleaving.” The exercises invite us to split, disjoin, or iterate meanings and thereby to open up new possibilities of awareness. What may seem to be “unnatural” cases of splitting are revealed to be merely splitting along other coordinates; they are perfectly “natural” cases within the expanded signficatory context. 7. *Splitting of Meaning* helps us focus on the potential for structural reassignment of meanings. Since what is sought to be elicited are unnatural splits, it is not surprising to see the influence of Zen and Dada, both attempts to dislodge accepted modes of thought through swift “illogical” breaks. In the third panel (see p. 77, fig. 7.3) of this subdivision, we encounter two phrases for contemplation. First is the declaration “A LINE IS A CRACK,” which sits inside a rectangle whose upper right corner is represented as folding back, revealing black underneath. The letters forming the words in the phrase appear to be semidiffuse, to partake both of the black (as revealed by the fold) that exists “under” the panel and the white that is of the “surface.” Now, we ordinarily do not think of a line—that is, an inscribed line—as a crack. We think of a line, if we think of its nature at all, as a physical mark upon the page. We do not think of it in what we might call its inverse nature, as a split forming or dividing the page into two halves. To think of the line

in this way (or of a crack as a line) is to substitute for the category of presence that of absence; it is to split meaning along this line.

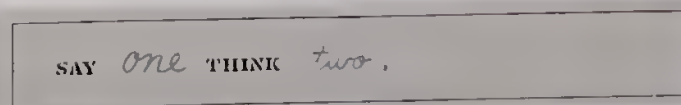
The second phrase we encounter in the same panel contains the imperative “SAY one THINK two.” This is, of course, impossible. Following a command to say “one” is to follow a command to think it. Though it may make some sense to say that we can be saying one thing while we are (really) thinking about another (such dual voices are heard in the wonderful first-date scene with Woody Allen and Diane Keaton in *Annie Hall*), it is impossible to follow a command to do both at the same time. The cognitive dissonance created by the attempt to “do” the exercise, when “doing the exercise” means following the written instruction, reveals what doing the exercise is really about. The exercise is completed in the experience of the potential split, in the experience of the distention of meaning that following the instruction brings upon us.

Finally, I would like to turn to the subdivisions that address elements of cognitive experience often not considered in theories of meaning or in philosophical theories as a whole, except perhaps in the ongoing discussion of ideology. In broad stroke, these constituents of meaning might be characterized as nonconceptual experience—experience involving feeling, apprehension, or behavior-reactive environmental interaction. They are dealt with in four subdivisions: 4. *The Energy of Meaning*, 10. *Texture of Meaning*, 12. *The Feeling of Meaning*, and 15. *Meaning of Intelligence*, of which I will discuss the final three.

Most philosophical treatments of meaning limit themselves to accounting for conceptual experience. This is primarily because the issue of



The Mechanism of Meaning, 7. Splitting of Meaning, panel 3 (detail)



The Mechanism of Meaning, 7. Splitting of Meaning, panel 3 (detail)



() FIRST SIGN OF SAPIENCE (ON REFLECTION)

The Mechanism of Meaning, 15. Meaning of Intelligence panel 2 (detail)

meaning in contemporary philosophy has been taken to be coextensive with an account of linguistic meaning, an area in which analysis of concept deployment seems to exhaust the field. Arakawa and Gins hold that we experience the world as having significance due to our experience as embodied intelligences, and conceptual states certainly do not canvas all the ways in which an embodied intelligence interacts with its environment. This is only to say that a significant part of our existence is informed by affect, mood, and biological state.²¹ 10. *Texture of Meaning* recalls that all significance exists in an infinitely variegated and textured context involving subjective and emotive as well as conceptual factors, what Frege would have excluded from a theory of meaning proper, as mere “coloring” (*Färbung*). The panels in 12. *The Feeling of Meaning* present feeling as constitutive of significance and as intimately connected with bodily states. And, in perhaps the most radical of the subdivisions, 15. *Meaning of Intelligence*, Arakawa and Gins challenge received conceptions of intelligence as rational or rationally reconstructible thought. 15. *Meaning of Intelligence* treats intelligence as a cross-species capacity that discerns environmental features crucial to correct functioning but that need not include a faculty for discerning such features as important. Intelligence is thus a structural feature of the universe, an expression of an economy and interdependence of subject and environment.²²

Because of the preconceptual nature of these claimed constituents of meaning, it is quite difficult both to construct panels that elicit appropriate responses verbally (by the presentation of written texts) and to analyze these panels. I make only a few remarks in this direction. First, some of the panels in 15. *Meaning of Intelligence* treat what, for the want of a better designation, is the emergence of consciousness. Gins and Arakawa follow what is now the common view that what consciousness is, at its most fundamental level, is directed sapience. To be conscious is to be aware

and awareness requires an object for that awareness. This property of consciousness, first discovered by Franz Brentano and developed in a rigorous philosophical fashion by Edmund Husserl, is what is commonly called intentionality.

An exercise in the second panel (see p. 106, fig. 15.2) of 15. *Meaning of Intelligence* presents a scene of a ship sailing across the surface of the sea at the horizon line. Centered in the scene is the sun (or perhaps, given the violet shading of the scene, night is indicated and we are looking at the moon). Enclosing an area that contains the ship, the sea, and the sun is a large pair of parentheses. A caption reads: “() FIRST SIGN OF SAPIENCE (ON REFLECTION).” What is being pointed out about sapience or, in the way I have framed the topic of this subdivision, consciousness? To be sure, the point is, in part, that consciousness is essentially directed toward an object; it is *about* something. It is also the exclusion of something. When I am conscious of a thing, my very attention involves selective sapience. This is *not* to say that I *choose* to disregard other objects in my field of consciousness. That would be nonsensical on two counts. First, the idea of choice seems entirely out of place in a description of what takes place when I become conscious of a thing or state of affairs. I must presuppose being conscious of alternatives in order for the idea of having a choice in a matter to gain a foothold. Second, the field of consciousness of which phenomenologists are apt to speak is consciousness of whatever is in that field; it makes no sense to say that something is in my field of consciousness without my being conscious of it. Nevertheless, consciousness is exclusive in the sense that (at least, in terms of reflective consciousnesses like ourselves) it may be argued that we are tacitly aware that the world is chock-full of potential objects of consciousness that are not actual objects of my consciousness at this moment. Under this understanding of the nature of consciousness, the exercise presents conscious-



The Mechanism of Meaning, 15. Meaning of Intelligence: panel 2

ness as an attending, which means a bracketing of a piece of the world for our cognitive intake.

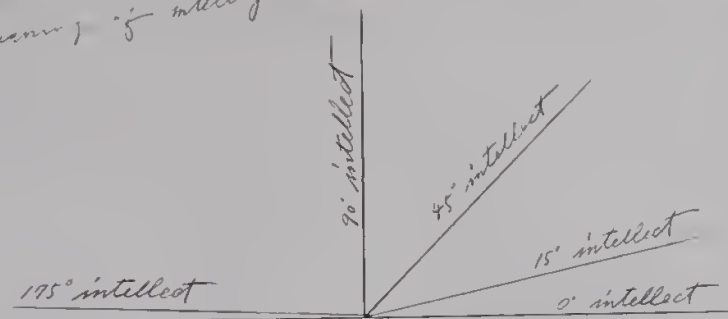
In the published third edition of *The Mechanism of Meaning*, the final panel of 15. *Meaning of Intelligence* is a sketch bearing the same title (see p. 52). In it, types or distributions of intelligence are depicted as relative degrees of angle and not as degrees on a scale. The point, I take it, is that intelligence is not merely a matter of concept use, or even of being reflectively aware of the world (although intelligence includes these ways of interacting with the world). Intelligence is meted out in different ways for different approaches to environments. Also depicted in the sketch is a lizard that has severed its tail, presumably in order to escape capture. What prohibits us from treating the biological adaptation (or nonadaptation) as a mode of “natural” or “evolutionary” intelligence? It is, on the

part of the lizard, a successful, context-sensitive, albeit nonreflective, interaction with the world. The point is pushed to its limit by implying that the growth tendencies of a tree can also be understood on this expanded model of intelligence.

MEANING, MORALITY, MORTALITY

Let us return to the world of human thought and endeavor. The concern of Arakawa and Gins to introduce us to ways of reconfiguring conceptual space does not mean that *The Mechanism of Meaning* is meant to incite us to any random restructuring of our takings of the world. In fact, it is a seriously moral work. The genocidal evil that has plagued this century teaches us that some reorderings of modes of thought are morally repugnant; those reorderings that emphasize the primacy of the aesthetic over

Meaning of intelligence

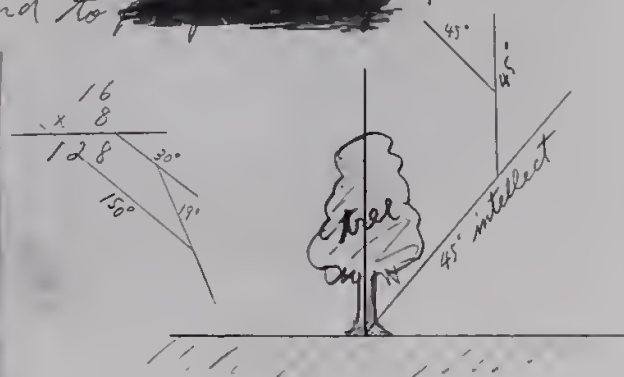


Dispersion of intelligence
Disposition

- * Not a question of percentage but of angle of approach
- * Both physical - Non-physical or the angle between these may be considered angle of approach
- * Largeness of angle does not necessarily correspond to ~~the~~



ESCAPE No. 4



the conceptual in the political sphere are particularly suspect. Arakawa and Gins seek a fundamental reordering that results in a different conception of what it is to be a morally responsible subject. The reordering aims at creating agents whose subjectivity no longer carries with it the irrational desire to consume nature and a compulsion for mass murder and self-destruction. Such subjects would view themselves as coeval with other beings, all the while recognizing the moral obligations that flow from the fact that we are creatures that influence our environment by our conceptions. Such a moral bearing involves nothing less than organizing our interactions in the world so as not to implicitly transfer to others the authority latent in our having this or that concept of the world as a whole. For while what counts as a world for us may have very much to do with our conception of it, no one conception of it (or even the fact that it can only be a world for us under some conception or another) should be taken as authority to make the world just that way. As I understand Arakawa and Gins, all privileging of modes of thought spell conceptual tyranny and are to be avoided. We must continually remake ourselves in as inclusive a manner as possible at any given time. The "end state" of cognitive growth would be one in which varying conceptions of the world were obtained in plurality and none assert preeminence.

The Mechanism of Meaning. 15. Meaning of Intelligence, panel 5, 1963-73
Pencil and paper on canvas, 96 x 68 inches
Collection of the Sezon Foundation, Tokyo

1. In addition to installations of Arakawa and Madeline Gins's *The Mechanism of Meaning* in its various stages at various times, there have been three book editions of the work and two films—*Why Not (A Serenade of Eschatological Ecology)*, 1969, and *For Example (A Critique of Never)*, 1971—that are explicitly structured according to the work's subdivisions. It is also reproduced in the present volume. Arakawa and Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny* (London: Academy Editions, 1994) and *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yōto*, built in Gifu, Japan, are continuations of this ongoing project. In preparing this essay, I referred to Arakawa and Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, new 3rd ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988).
2. Paul Grice, "Meaning," *Philosophical Review* 66 (1957), pp. 377–88.
3. See generally Willard Van Orman Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), pp. 20–46. Although Quine is often recruited in aid of meaning holism, he is a meaning skeptic. I shall follow general practice, however, and speak of Quine's views as applicable to questions of linguistic meaning.
4. See *ibid.*, p. 41. "Our statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but only as a corporate body." Also see Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized," in Quine, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 89: "Meaning, once we get beyond observation sentences, ceases in general to have any clear applicability to single sentences."
5. See Quine, "Two Dogmas," pp. 42–43.

The unit of empirical significance is the whole of science. . . . The totality of our so-called knowledge, from the most casual matters of geography and history to the profoundest laws of atomic physics or even of pure mathematics and logic, is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges. Or, to change the figure, total science is like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience. A conflict with experience at the periphery occasions readjustments in the interior of the field. Truth values have to be redistributed over some of our statements. Reevaluation of some statements entails reevaluation of others, because of their logical interconnections—the logical laws being in turn simply further statements of the system, certain further elements of the field. . . . But the total field is so underdetermined by its boundary conditions, experience, that there is much latitude of choice as to what statements to reevaluate in the light of any single contrary experience. No particular experiences are linked with any particular statements in the interior of the field, except indirectly through considerations of equilibrium affecting the field as a whole.
6. This is also a continuing theme in the work of Nelson Goodman. See, for example, Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).
7. Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), chap. 2, *passim*.
8. See Donald Davidson, "Radical Interpretation," in Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), p. 125. "All understanding of the speech of another involves radical interpretation."
9. See, for example, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 2nd ed., ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), I–§ 19, "To imagine a language is to imagine a form of life"; § 23, "The term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of a language is part of an activity, or of a form of life"; and II, x, "What has to be accepted, the given, is—so to speak—*forms of life*."
10. See, for example, Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); and Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (New York: Verso, 1975). An analysis of this literature is a complex matter and one that cannot be treated here. In my view, too much is made of the allegedly relativistic deliverances of these views. First, Kuhn never embraces the claims that his arguments, forwarded in the comparatively narrow context of an analysis of the meaning of terms in scientific theories, are applicable generally to language or less overtly theoretical organizations of thought. Moreover, even the most radical "incommensuralists" like Feyerabend break down and appeal to some sort of immediate way to understand rival schemes, generally one that is not so closely tied to notions of rational reconstruction and translation as Quine would have it.
11. See Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," in Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, pp. 193–194.

The trouble is that the notion of [a conceptual scheme's] fitting the totality of experience, like the notion of fitting the facts, or of being true to the facts, adds nothing intelligible to the simple concept of being true. To speak of sensory experience rather than the evidence, or just the facts, expresses a view about the source or nature of evidence, but it does not add a new entity to the universe against which to test conceptual schemes. The totality of sensory evidence is what we want provided, it is all the evidence there is; and all the evidence there is is just what it takes to make sentences or theories true. Nothing, however, no *thing*, makes sentences and theories true, not experience, not surface irritations, not the world, can make a sentence true.

Our attempt to characterize languages or conceptual schemes in terms of the notion of fitting some entity has come down, then, to the simple thought that something is an acceptable scheme or theory if it is true. And the criterion of a conceptual scheme different from our own now becomes: largely true but not translatable. The question whether this is a useful criterion is just the question of how well we understand the notion of truth, as applied to language, independent of the notion of translation. The answer is, I think, that we do not understand it independently at all.
12. Davidson most clearly endorses this position in "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," in E. LePore, ed., *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson* (London: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 433–46.
13. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Paris: Payot, 1973), p. 160.
14. Compare Paul Churchland's provocative thought-experiment concerning the possibility of the penetration of content we now consider to be explicitly theoretical, and even at variance with everyday perceptual experience, into later forms of perception; see Churchland, *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), chap. 1. To the extent that we conceive of our perceptual structures as "hardwired" capacities, not subject to change through conceptual incursion, Churchland can be seen as arguing for at least the possibility that these capacities have a degree of plasticity.
15. The idea that successful art creates new ways of perceiving the world and that it is only art that can afford this experience finds its fullest expression in the writings of the German Romantics, particularly in Schlegel's view that life and art are reciprocal creative enterprises and the early Schelling's identification of the artistic intuition as being the closest approximation one can hope for an immediate experience of the ultimate unity of nature and spirit. Similar thoughts animate Schopenhauer's argument for the meta-physical importance of music and, largely following Schopenhauer, the early views of Nietzsche on the significance of tragedy.
16. Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," in Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974) I 2, 179. Benjamin's attitude toward this disappearance is difficult to characterize. Initially he seems to treat the disenchantment of the world and of art merely as a feature of modernity, the loss of which is not an occasion for mourning. Postliterate art will be unabashedly "political" art, its purpose will be to elicit appropriately Marxist emotional responses from its audience. Later, in his writings on Proust and Baudelaire, Benjamin takes a more negative view of the technical incursion into art. Connecting it with what he takes to be the radically disoriented nature of modern, technological society, Benjamin treats the loss of aura as an impoverishment. Still, he is not entirely pessimistic, claiming a possible reconstruction of art through a reenchantment of the everyday—a reappropriation of technology by art that he believed to be essential to Surrealism.
17. Arthur Danto has pointed out the importance of Dada for Arakawa and Gins's work; see Danto, "Gins and Arakawa: Building Sensoriums," in Danto, *Embodied Meanings: Critical Essays and Aesthetic Meditations* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1994), pp. 119–25.
18. See Jean-François Lyotard, *Que prendre? Adams, Arakawa, Anren* (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1987), pp. 67–82, for a meditation on the dialogue between Arakawa's images and Zen Buddhism.
19. There is also a parallel to be drawn here between neutralization and Martin Heidegger's later notion of the primordial meaning-conferring relation of *Da-sein* and Being as one of a clearing away. Arakawa and Gins's conception of neutralization of subjectivity does not, however, trade in Heidegger's *ontavism*. For Heidegger's views, see "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," in Heidegger, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1952).
20. This corresponds to the second type of ambiguity identified in William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (New York: New Directions, 1947).
21. See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); and Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). It is not exactly true that the embodied nature of our existence has entirely escaped philosophical scrutiny, but the philosophical tradition in which such issues receive their fullest discussion is quite remote from prevailing tendencies: nineteenth-century German thought (Schopenhauer and Nietzsche) and twentieth-century phenomenology (Maurice Merleau-Ponty). The situation in contemporary linguistic theory is a bit more conducive to an analysis of the cognitive significance of nonconceptual mental states and bodily dispositions and attitudes, so Arakawa and Gins find themselves allied with recent work in psycholinguistics, in particular the work of Lakoff and Johnson on metaphoric structuring of concepts. However, Lakoff seems to harbor doubts about Arakawa and Gins's claim for the ultimate plasticity of our categories of thought; see his essay in the present volume, pp. 112–23.
22. The view that there is no difference in kind between the lawful structure of the world and the lawful structure of thought, foreign as it may seem to us, has a long and distinguished philosophical pedigree, extending back to Heraclitus and Anaxagoras, through Aristotle, to Hegel. However, Arakawa and Gins's view does not seem to share the teleological commitments of these former views.

THE MECHANISM OF MEANING

THE MECHANISM OF MEANING

1. NEUTRALIZATION OF SUBJECTIVITY
2. LOCALIZATION AND TRANSFERENCE
3. PRESENTATION OF AMBIGUOUS ZONES
4. THE ENERGY OF MEANING (BIOCHEMICAL,
PHYSICAL, AND PSYCHOPHYSICAL ASPECTS)
5. DEGREES OF MEANING
6. EXPANSION AND REDUCTION-MEANING OF SCALE
7. SPLITTING OF MEANING
8. REASSEMBLING
9. REVERSIBILITY
10. TEXTURE OF MEANING
11. MAPPING OF MEANING
12. FEELING OF MEANING
13. LOGIC OF MEANING
14. CONSTRUCTION OF THE MEMORY OF MEANING
15. MEANING OF INTELLIGENCE
16. REVIEW AND SELF-CRITICISM

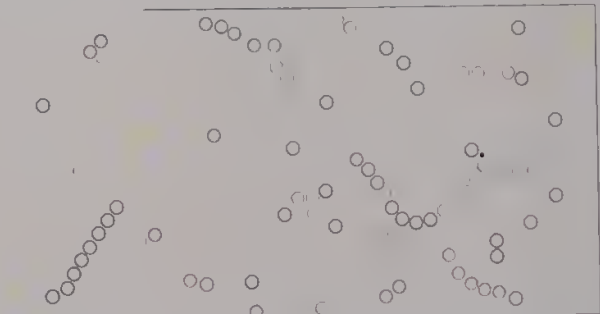
1. Neutralization of Subjectivity

1 NEUTRALIZATION OF SUBJECTIVITY

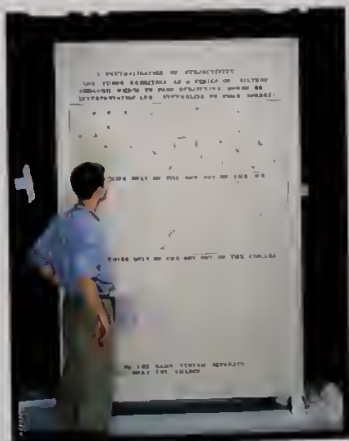
USE THESE EXERCISES AS A SERIES OF 'FILTERS' THROUGH WHICH TO PASS SUBJECTIVE MODES OF INTERPRETATION AND NEUTRALIZE TO SOME DEGREE:



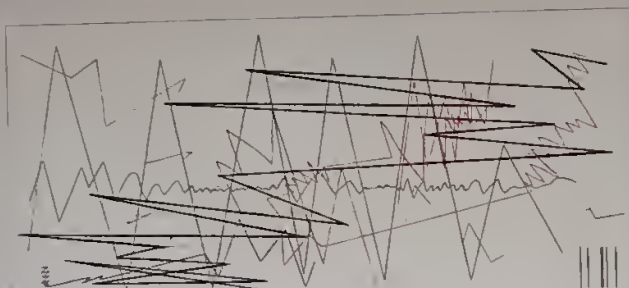
PLEASE THINK ONLY OF THE DOT NOT OF THE X'S.



PLEASE THINK ONLY OF THE DOT NOT OF THE CIRCLES.

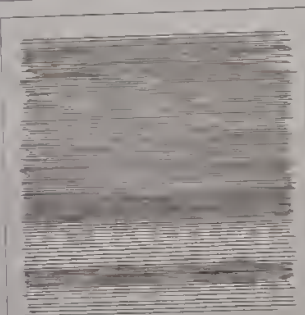


USING THE SAME SYSTEM SEPARATE THE NEXT TWO SHADES

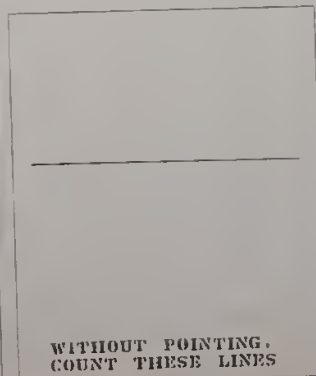


MAKE THESE LINES AS ELASTIC AS POSSIBLE.
EXCESS AIR MAY BE LET OUT AT ANY OF
THESE JUNCTURES

MAKE THIS AS TIGHT AS POSSIBLE



WITHOUT POINTING.
COUNT THESE LINES

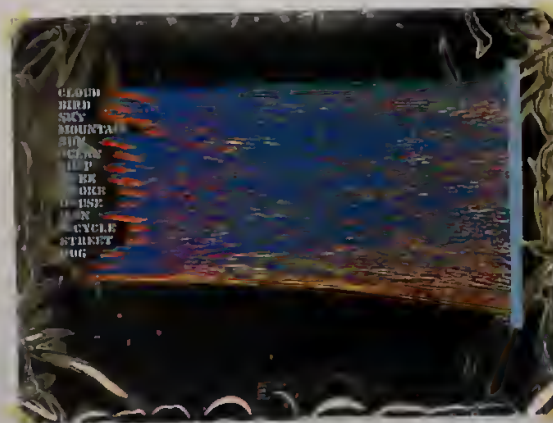


WITHOUT POINTING.
COUNT THESE LINES

LOOK AT ANY CLOSE OBJECT AS YOU
OPEN AND CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR
SEVERAL MINUTES



CHOOSE EVERYTHING



FULL

EMPTY

Keep the minority equal to the delinquency...

These professors of philosophy are always engaged in a certain minority. He then informs them in fullness: 'I shall show a blue or white dot on each of your foreheads. If you see a white dot on anyone's forehead, please raise your right hand. If you see a blue dot on anyone's forehead, please raise your left hand. He puts white dots on all three professors, and of course they all raise their hands. Finally, even one of them, Professor Ted (1941) Hops. There's his hand and distance! 'Obviously I must have a white dot'.

'How do you know?' asks the Dean.

Professor Hops's explanation was clear: 'How does he explain that he must have a white dot?' (There are no mirrors in the room.)

(A minute later)

STOP THINKING ABOUT THIS

700.800.000

100 mph

10 mph

100 mph



SUSANNAH NEUTRALIZES HERSELF

- IN MIRROR
- HYZIN WATER
- TOUCHING HER TOOT
- CLOTH BETWEEN ARMS AND LEG
- ANGLE OF BODY
- BEING SPREAD BUT ON DIFFERENT TEXTURES
- DISPERSING HER PROPERTY (COMB, PEARLS, ETC.)
- DIVIDING HAIR INTO MANY BRAIDS
- SAME BRACELET ON EACH ARM
- LISTENING

EACH ELDER NEUTRALIZES HIMSELF

- BY NOT SEEING SUSANNAH
- THE STANDING ONE BY TOUCHING A TREE (PENCIL?)
- THE OTHER BY GRABBING A CLOTH AND THE LOSING OF ALL HIS BODY EXCEPT FOR HEAD AND ARM
- THEY NEUTRALIZE EACH OTHER THROUGH THE OPPOSITION OF THE ANGLE THROUGH WHICH THEY SEE NOTHING

IN GENERAL

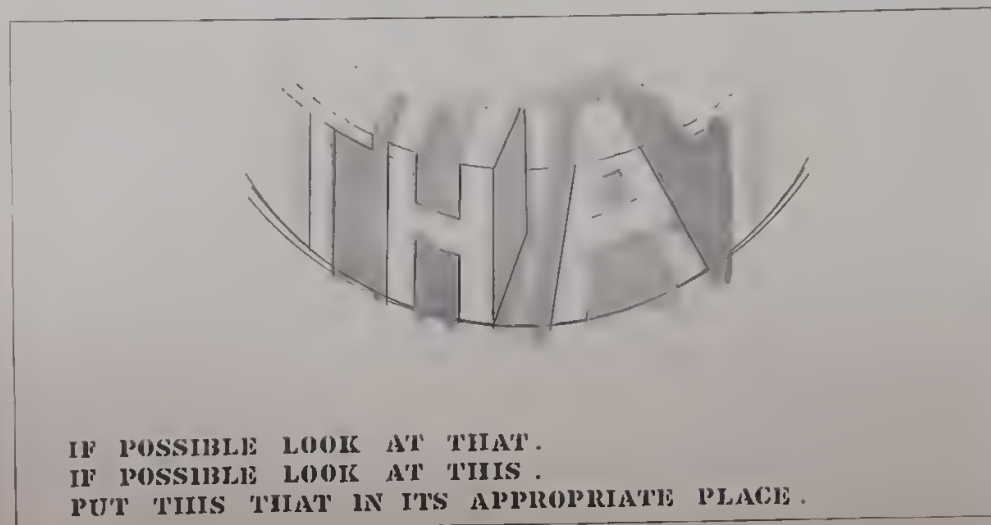
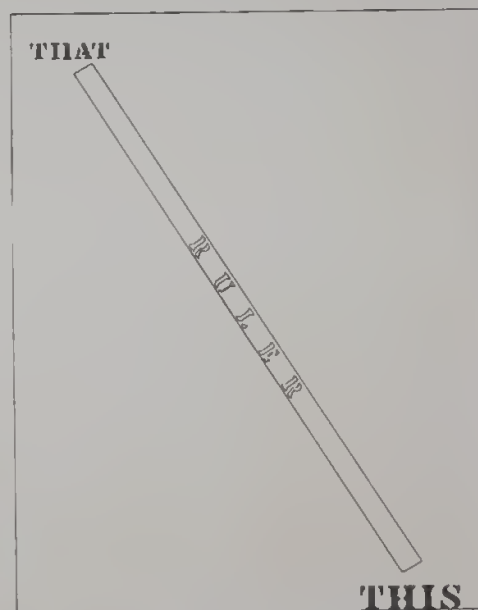
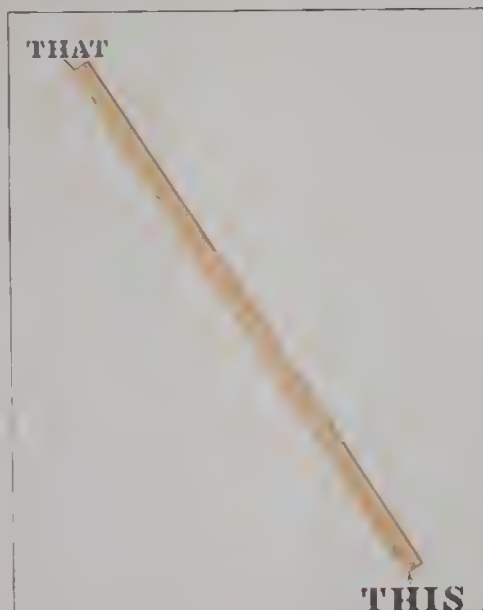
- SMALL DUCKS NEUTRALIZE THE LARGE ONE
- WATER NEUTRALIZES THE MIRROR—ITSELF BUILT THROUGH NEUTRALIZATION?
- BOTH ANIMAL AND BIRD ARE LOOKING AWAY

BESIDES THIS LIST THERE MUST BE MANY MORE NEUTRALIZATIONS IN OPERATION IN THIS PAINTING.

2. Localization and Transference

2 LOCALIZATION AND TRANSFERENCE

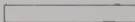
THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND FIGURES ATTEMPT TO LOCATE THE AREA OF MEANING (PERHAPS TO PINPOINT) AND TO EXPLORE THE MOBILITY OF THE CONFIGURATION WHICH SUGGESTS ITSELF. IN THIS CASE, PLEASE DO NOT THINK OF THE CONTENT ONLY OF THE CONTAINER.



"FIVE MILES" MEANS

- 1 HEADACHE
- 2 DELICIOUS
- 3 COLOR

"CHAIRS" ARE

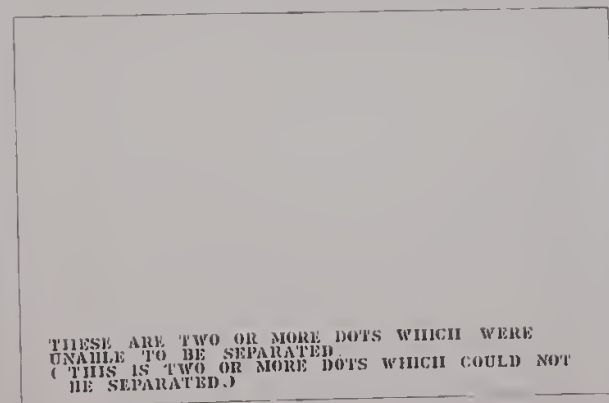
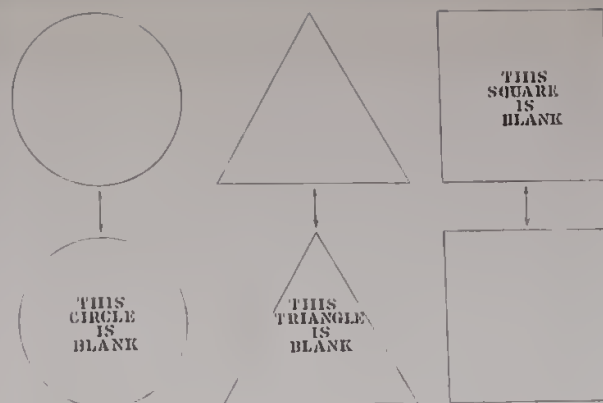
- 1
- 2 BIRTHDAYS
- 3 MISS
- 4 
- 5 MELODIES



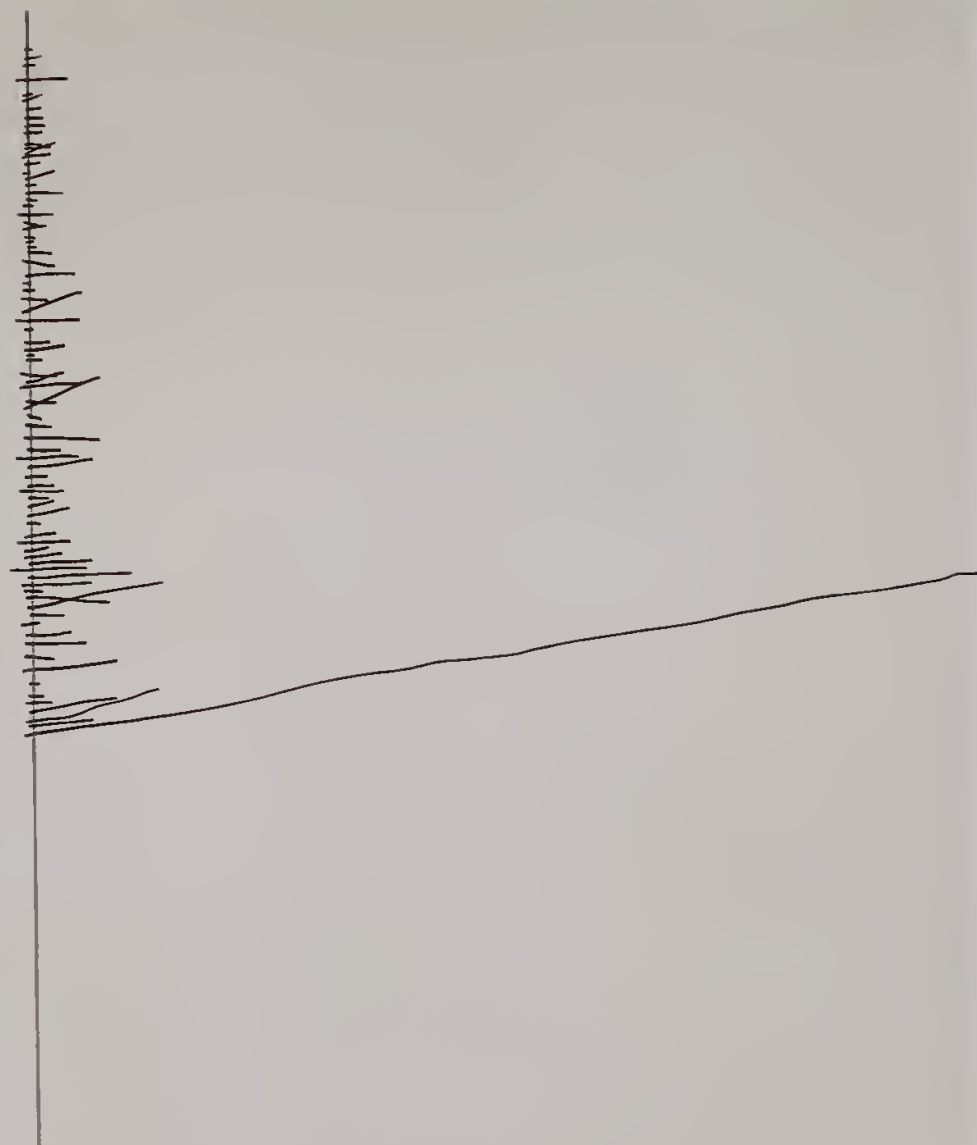
ENCLOSURE FOR ONE ATTENTION SPAN



THESE DOTS SHOULD APPROACH THE VIEWER AT REGULAR INTERVALS STARTING FROM THE MOST DISTANT BOUNDARY SUGGESTED BY THIS FIGURE



THIS SYMBOL IS THIS  SE



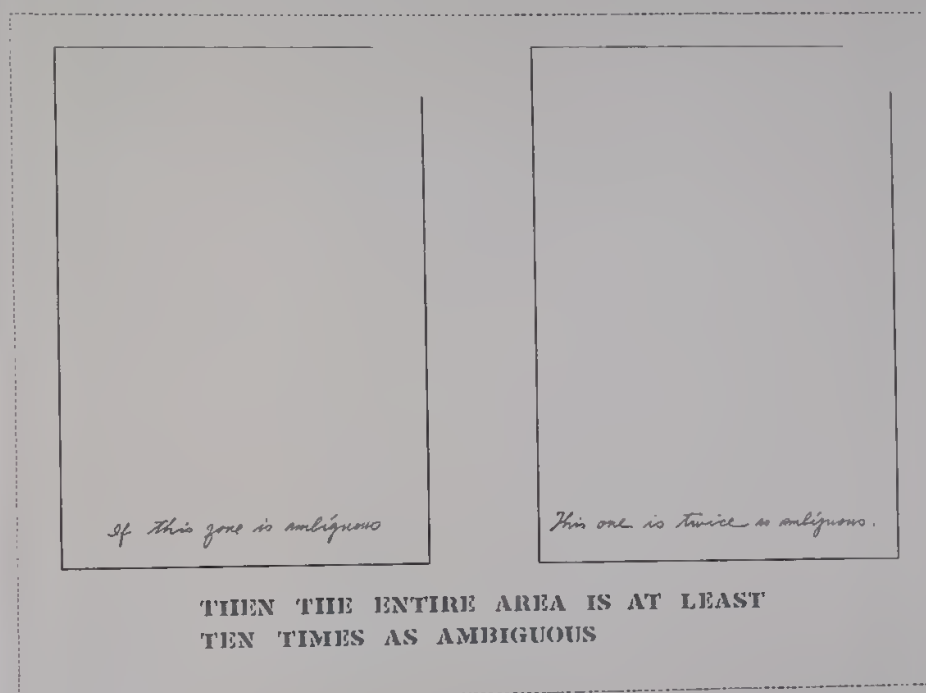
- 1 THE LENGTH OF DECISION
- 2 NEXT TO THE SELECTION OF A MISTAKE
- 3 GEOMETRY OF DECISION
- 4 THE NATURE OF TASTE OR BULLSHIT

NATURAL HISTORY

3. Presentation of Ambiguous Zones

3 PRESENTATION OF AMBIGUOUS ZONES

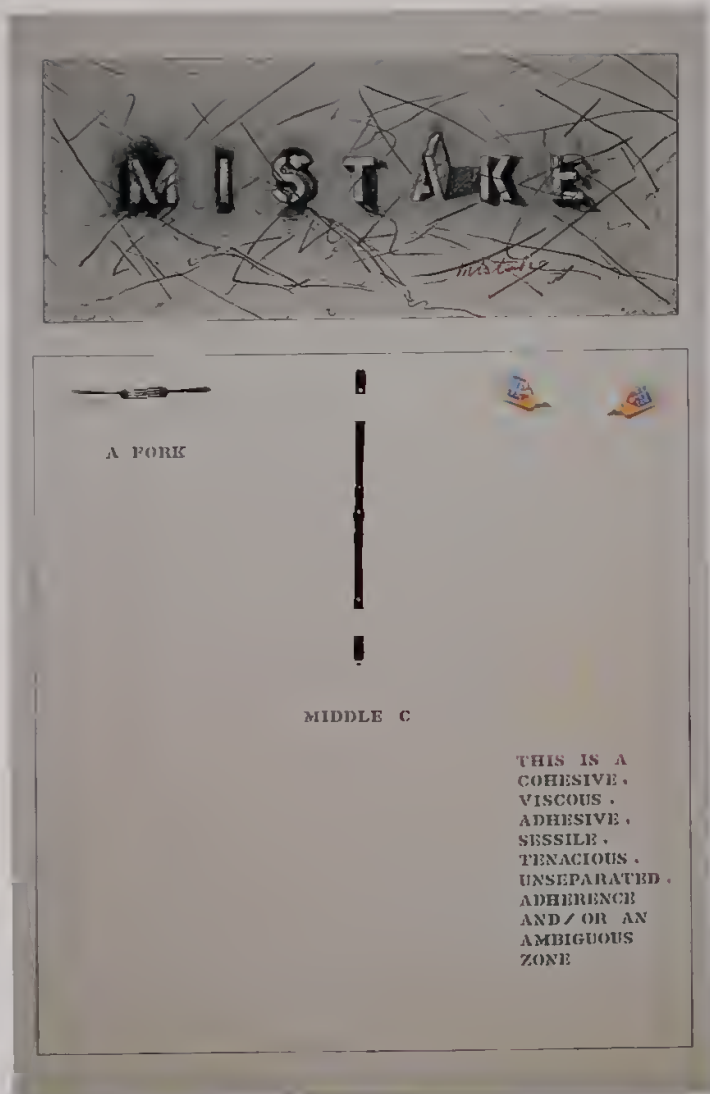
EVERYTHING IS AMBIGUOUS AS WELL AS THE JUDGEMENT THAT SOMETHING IS AMBIGUOUS. AS SOON AS ANY FACT IS PRESENTED, AMBIGUITY APPEARS AS THE ZONE OF ALTERNATE POSSIBILITIES. ATTEMPTS TO SELECT (JUXTAPOSE) AMBIGUOUS ZONES WHICH MIGHT EXPLAIN ONE ANOTHER OR THE (AMBIGUOUS) NATURE OF AMBIGUITY.



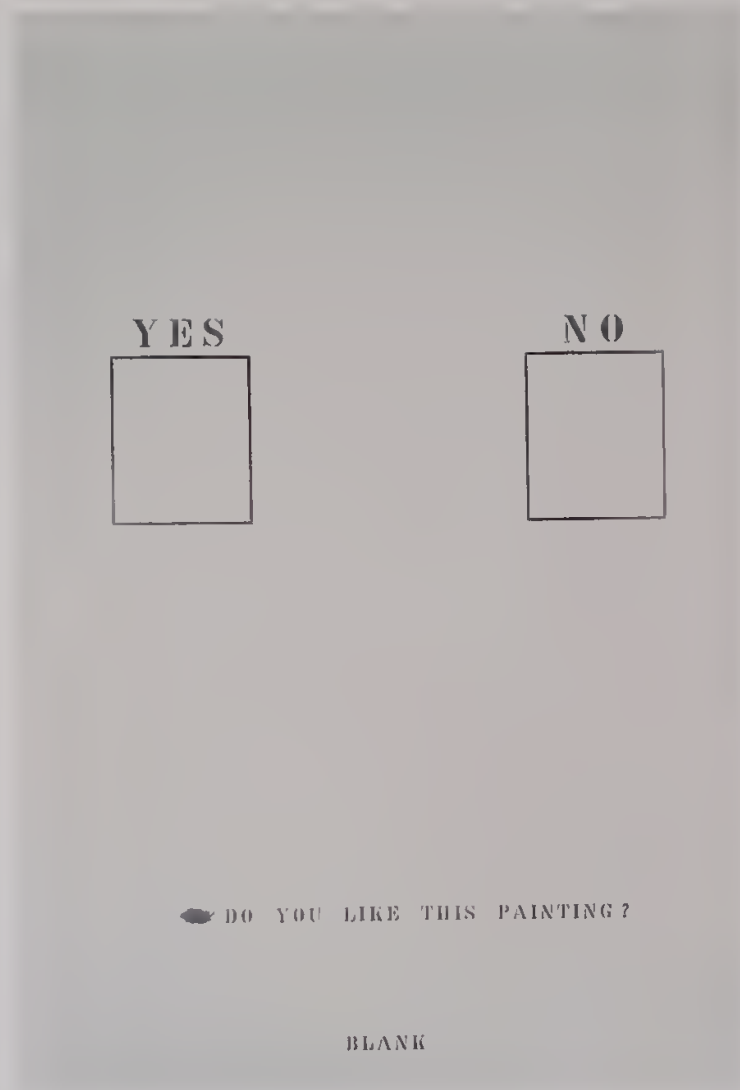
USE ALL OF THE ABOVE TO SAY *yes* OR *no*

ARE THESE ZONES FLAWLESS ?

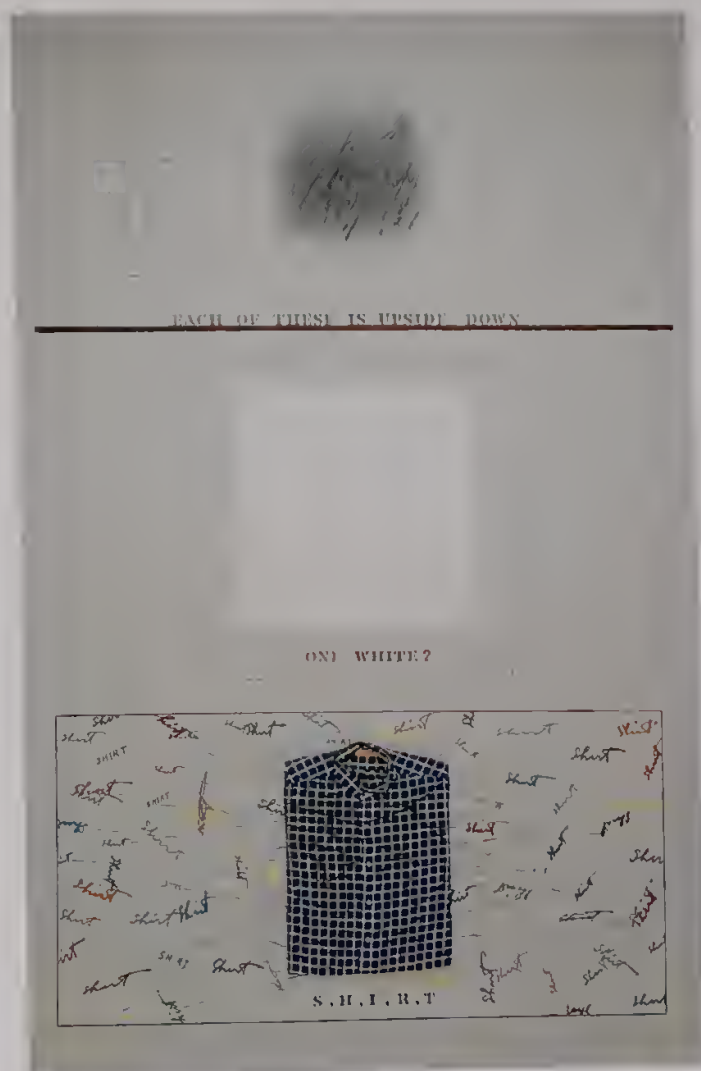
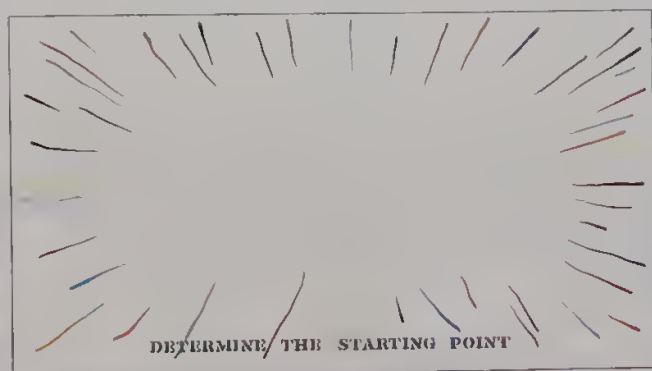
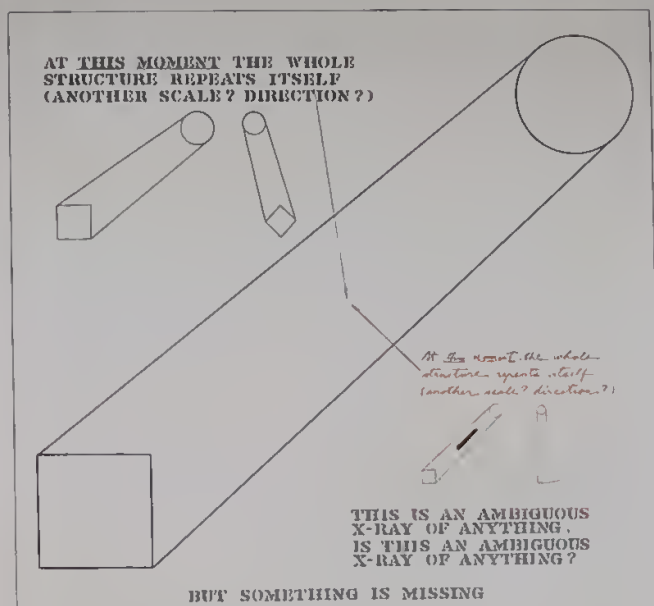
IN THE NON-SENSE WHAT IS THE RATIO OF ZONES PRESENTED TO AMBIGUITIES EMPLOYED ?



32



33



THE NETWORK OF AMBIGUOUS ZONES OF A LEMON

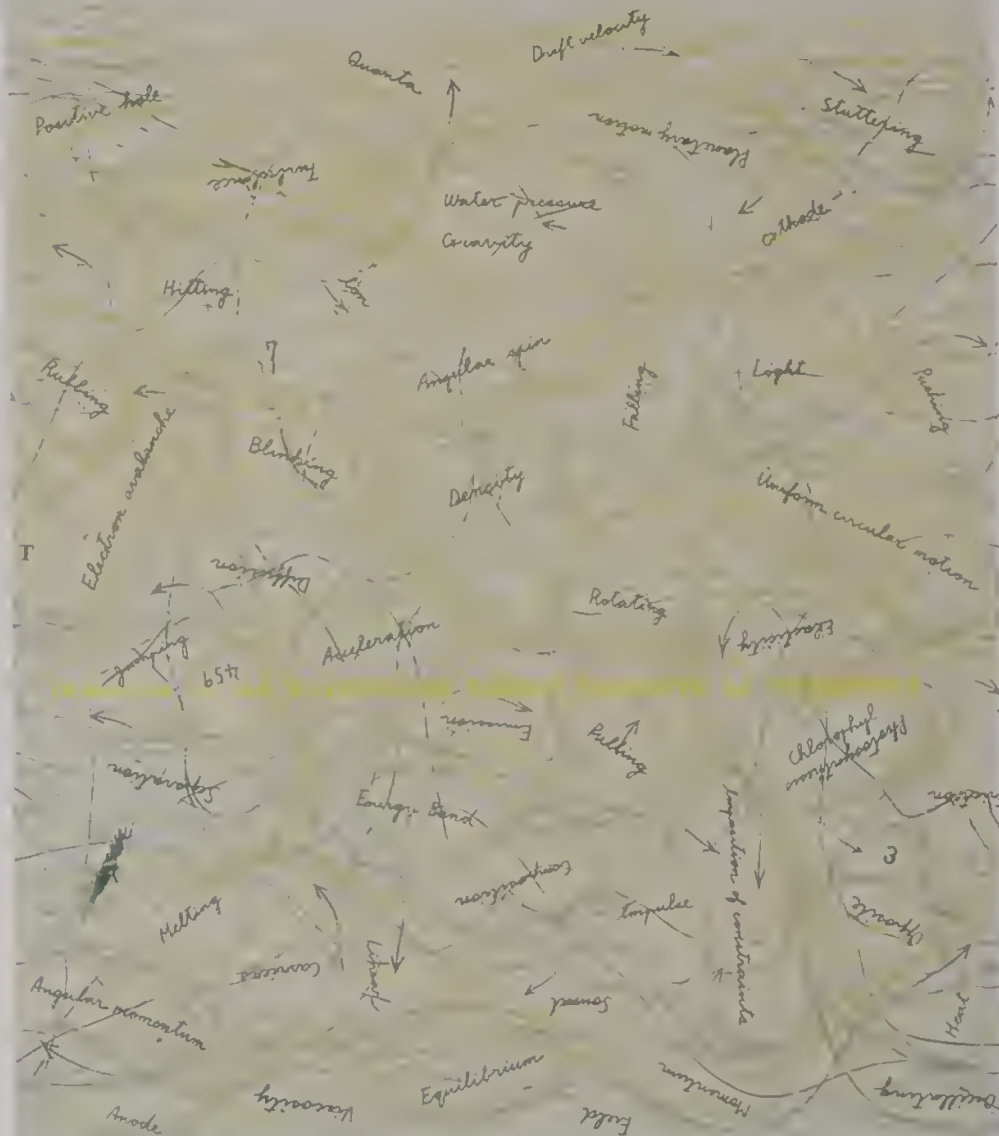


- * TO MAKE A 3-D MODEL OF THIS-PERHAPS BASED ON DOUBLE HELIX IF THAT ONE DAY EXISTS. THEN THE QUALITY OF AMBIGUITY MIGHT CHANGE
- * AMBIGUOUS ZONES EXIST WITHIN EACH STATEMENT OR REPRESENTATION AND ACROSS THE CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE WHICH SEPARATES THESE .
- * HOW TO ESTIMATE THE EXTENT OF THESE ZONES?
- * HOW NOT TO THINK IN TERMS OF ESTIMATION BUT TO DEAL WITH AMBIGUOUS ZONES AS BASIC UNITS ?.....

4. The Energy of Meaning

4 THE ENERGY OF MEANING

A STUDY OF SIGN PROCESS IN MOTION, AS MOTION; THIS WILL INCLUDE A REPORT OF CURRENT THEORIES (BIOCHEMICAL, PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOPHYSICAL ASPECTS) AS WELL AS FURTHER SPECULATION



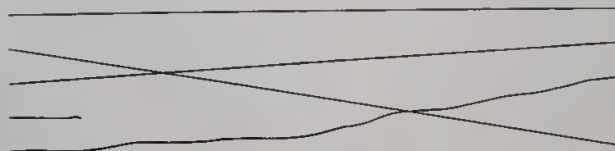
GREY ARROWS-RANDOM ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES IN PRE-ENERGY STATE
WHITE ARROWS-REPRESENT THE UNSPECIFIED

WILAREPERS IS NOT COVERED BY A WORD OR A WHITE OR GREY ARROW IN THIS DIAGRAM REPRESENTS THE UNSUSPECTED AND THE BARELY SUSPECTED IN EVERY CONTEXT. THE MANNER AND THE PURPOSE OF INDICATING THIS HERE HAVE TO DO WITH THE SUSPICION OF THE CRUCIAL ROLE WHICH SUCH UNSUSPECTED (NON-EXISTENT?) FORCES PLAY IN ESTABLISHING A GROUND.

AS YOU DRAW YOUR EYES BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE CANVAS CONNECT THE DOTS INTO WHATEVER LINES YOU WANT



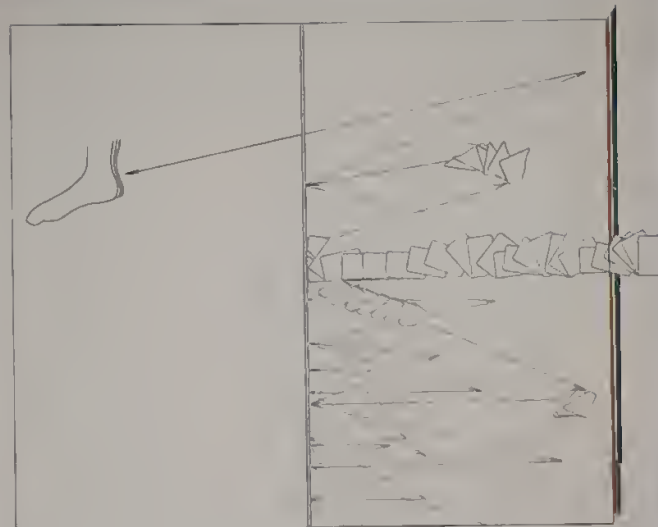
DRAW EYES BACK AND FORTH TO CONNECT DOTS INTO LINES WHILE BYPASSING THE OBSTACLE



FIND APPROPRIATE EYE MOTION TO REDUCE EACH LINE BACK INTO ORIGINATING DOTS AT EITHER END



DRAW EYES BACK AND FORTH TO CONNECT DOTS INTO LINES

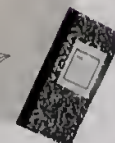


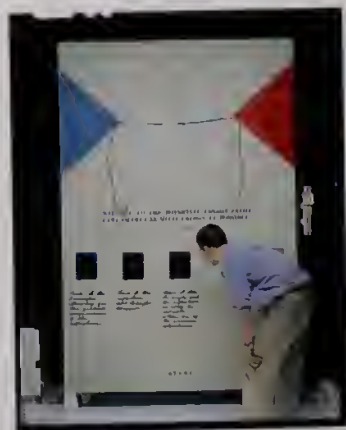
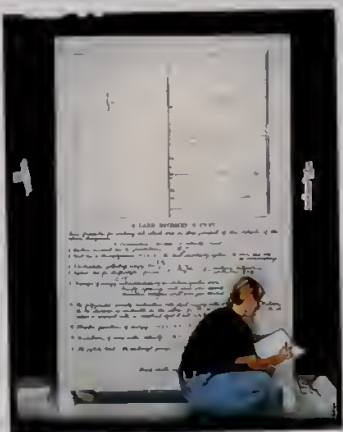
A CARD BECOMES A FOOT

Some formulas for working out about one or two percent of the details of the above diagram

- * P-velocity $m = \text{mass}$ $V = \text{velocity}$ $P = mv$
- * Newton's universal law of gravitation $F = \frac{GM_1M_2}{R^2}$
- * First law of thermodynamics $E = Q - W$ $Q = \text{heat absorbed by system}$ $W = \text{Work done on surroundings}$
- * Electrostatic potential energy $\phi = \frac{q_1q_2}{R}$
- * Coulomb's law for electrostatic forces $F = \frac{q_1q_2}{R^2}$ $R = \text{distance between particles}$ $q = \text{charge}$
- * Transfer of energy and momentum of an electromagnetic wave
Energy crossing unit area per second $S = \frac{CEB}{4\pi}$
Momentum crossing unit area per second $P = \frac{S}{c} = \frac{EB}{4\pi}$
- * The Fitzgerald-Lorentz contraction An object moving with the velocity V relative to the observer is contracted in the ratio $\sqrt{1 - \frac{V^2}{c^2}}$ in a direction parallel to its motion as compared with an identical object at rest relative to the observer
- * Planck's quantum of energy $E = h\nu$ $h = 6.625 \times 10^{-27} \text{ erg/sec}$
- * Variation of mass with velocity $m = \frac{M_0}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{V^2}{c^2}}}$ * Kretz's curve and cycle
- * The peptide bond - the carbonyl group ($-CO-$) and the amino group ($-NH-$)

Please write corrections or additions here →





5. Degrees of Meaning

5 DEGREES OF MEANING

EXERCISES TO STUDY THE OPERATION OF ABSTRACTION
THROUGH THE ALTERATION OF SIGNIFICATIONS BY DEGREES
(ANGLE, POSITION, INTENSITY, PERSPECTIVE, ...) AND THE
RANGE OF THIS NOTION OF DEGREES IN ABSTRACTION THROUGH
EXTENSIVE COMPARISON OF THIS (TO SURROUND 'DEGREE'
BY DEGREES ?)



USE THE FACT THAT:

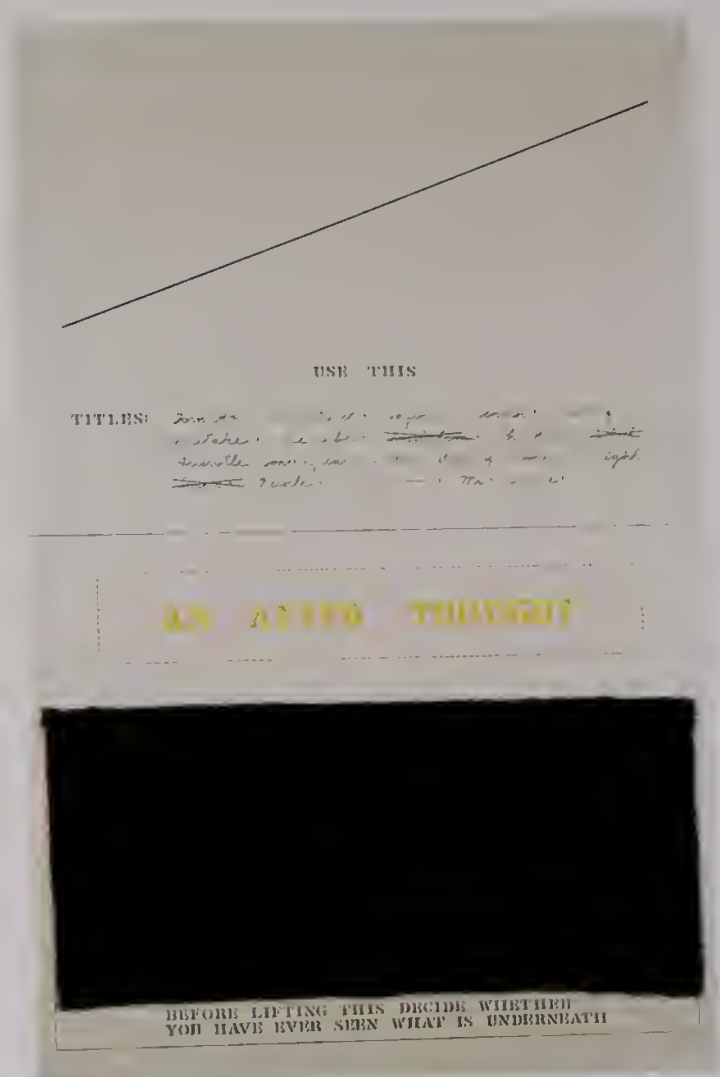
THE ABOVE OBJECT (*any object in the world*)
THE ABOVE PAINTING (*any painting*)
THE ABOVE GAME (*any game*)
THE ABOVE STRUCTURE (*any structure of the structure*)
THE ABOVE DIAGRAM (*any diagram*)

IS ISOMORPHIC TO ANYTHING

(CHAIR, LANDSCAPE, AIRPLANE, HAND, CAKE, ETC ...)

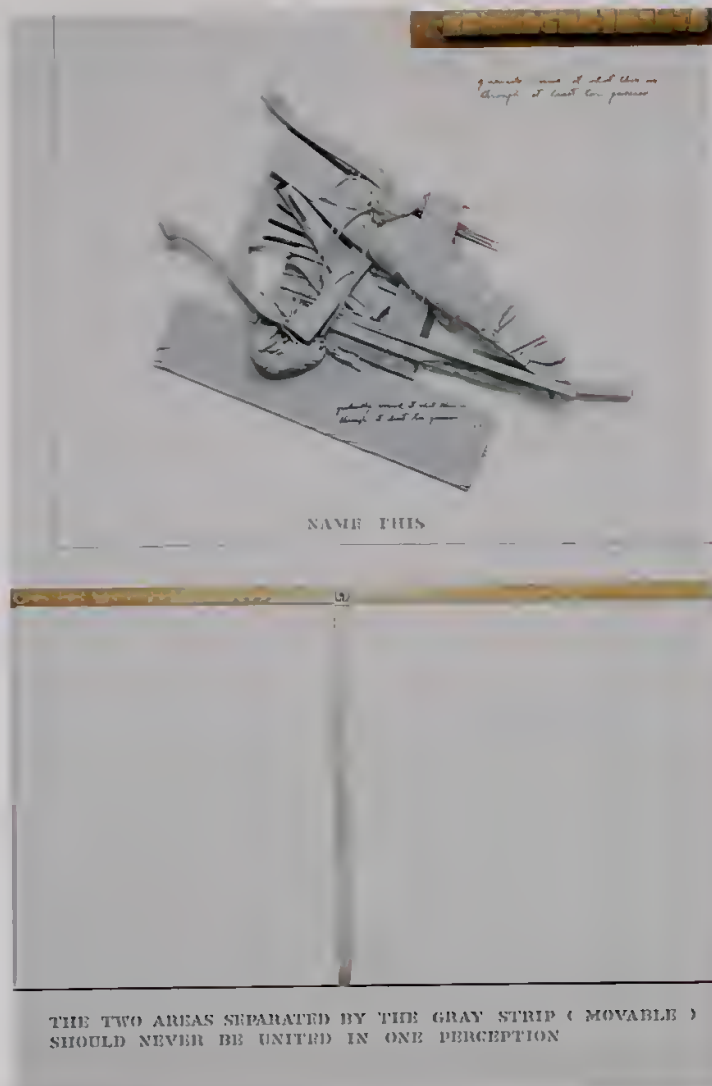
TO SURROUND DEGREE BY DEGREES

THE ABOVE SOUND

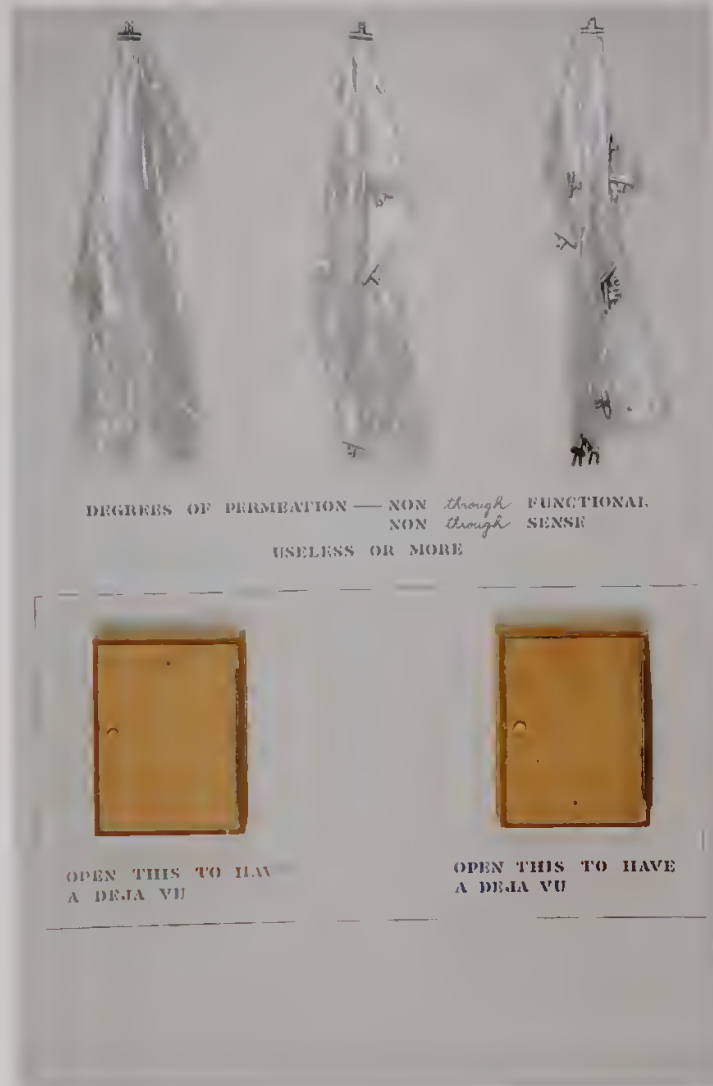


53

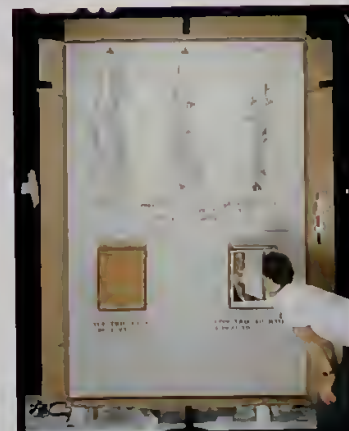




54



55



A B C D E F G H I J K L M Z

1234 5 6 78 9

CAT RAN MAT DOG HAT COW GOT BOY

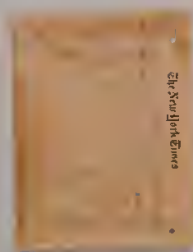
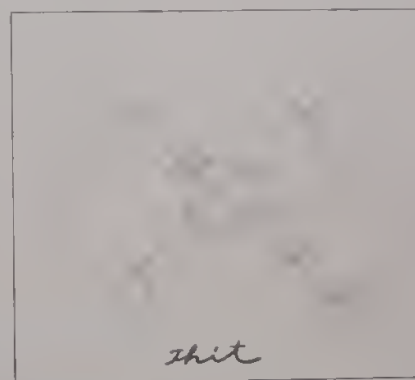
WHISPER WHISTLE COVER PAIR WOOL SHEEP

NEVER MIND WHAT HE SAYS

HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON AGAIN

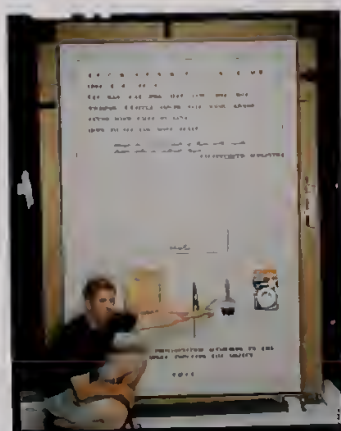
Attempt to pronounce each of these with mouth closed (with or without tape).

KINAESTHETIC SCULPTURE



VARY THE RATE OF PRONUNCIATION ACCORDING TO THE
LENGTH OF TIME SPENT TOUCHING THE OBJECT

T H A S



6. Expansion and Reduction— Meaning of Scale

6 EXPANSION AND REDUCTION—MEANING OF SCALE

ATTEMPTS TO OBSERVE THE REGULATORY OPERATIONS OF SCALE THROUGH EXERCISES FOR EXPANDING AND REDUCING BOTH PARTIAL AND OVER-ALL PATTERNS. SOME OF THESE MAY BE USED AS PROBES TOWARD THE DISCOVERY OF CRITICAL POINTS OF NON-CONFORMITY.



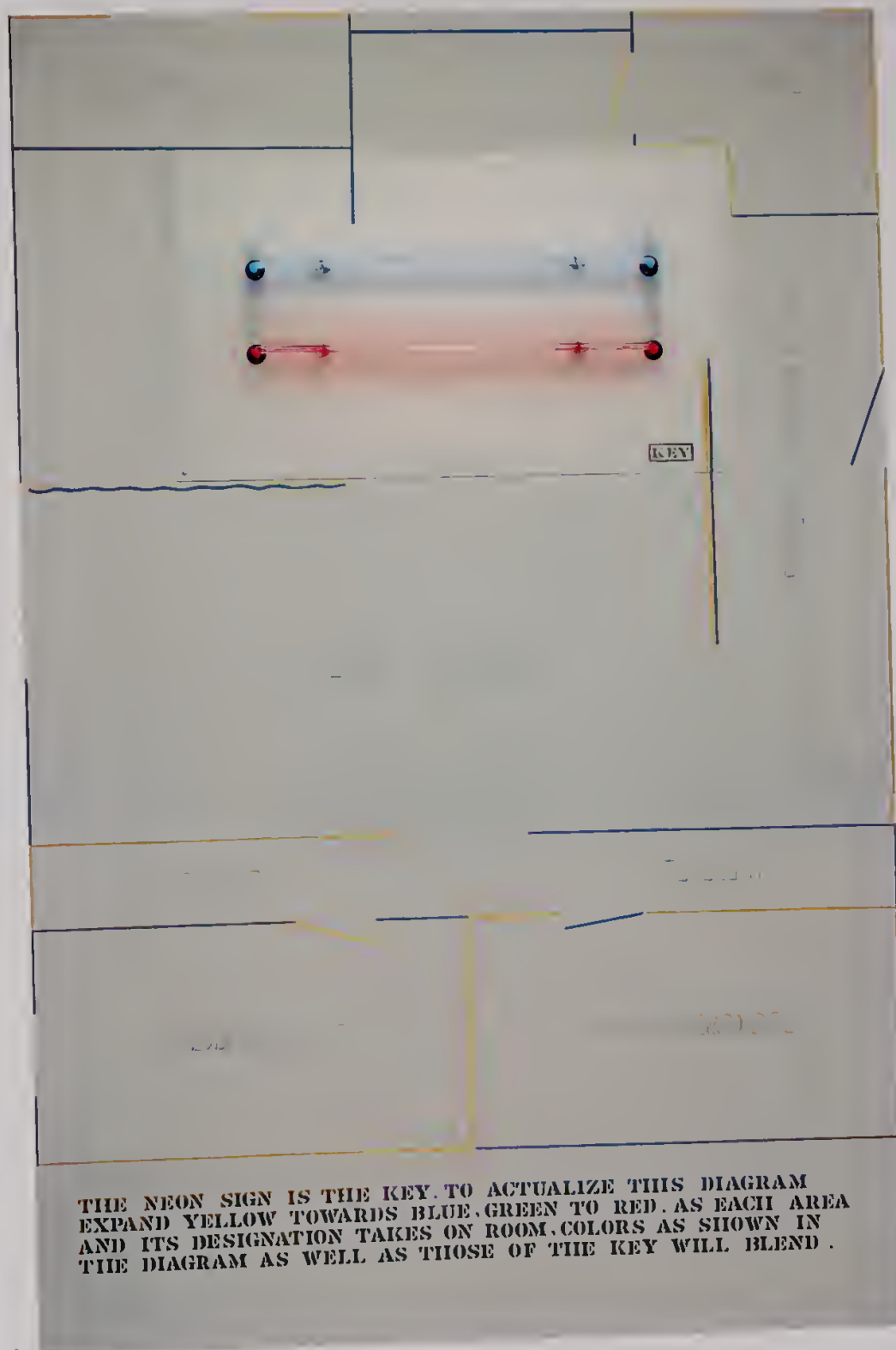
THIS IS 1,000,000 × ITS SIZE



SMELL THIS



62



FUCK INTERCOURSE!

Woman Man Man Man Woman Man



THIS MAY SUDDENLY START TO EXPAND

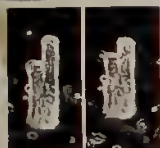
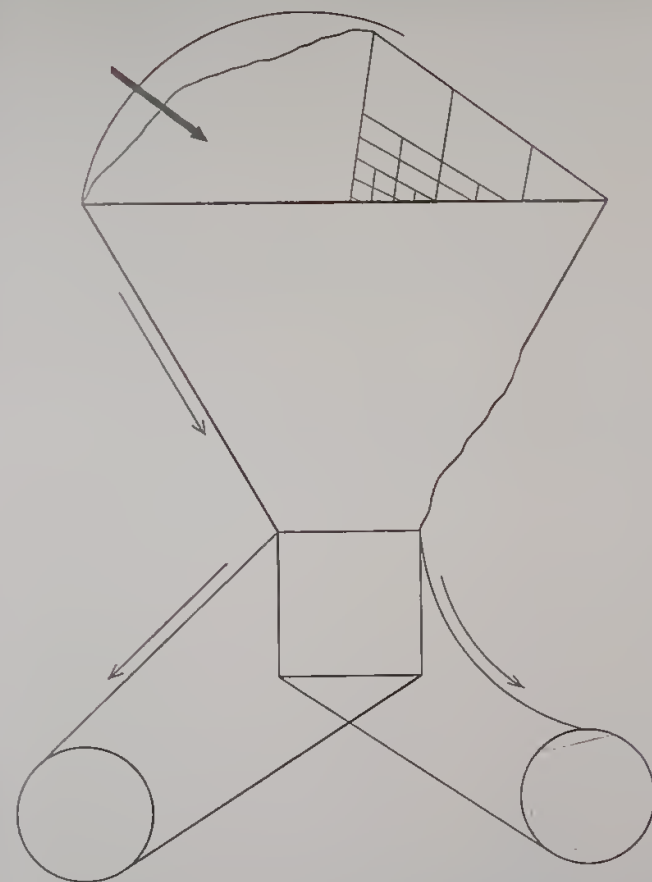


Fig. 1. Vascular state with of some
being approximately 1/2 and
the other 1/2. The state of some cells. These
diagrams with state with a highly
concentrated light state. The state
off was altered in by slight increase,
and a red line was used to show in re-
lating the cross section. The large size
and irregular shape of the state (Fig.
1) shows that it is composed of sev-
eral cells. The structure cells in state
11 shows that the state with
back of 1/2.

A NEW
JAPANESE ENGLISH

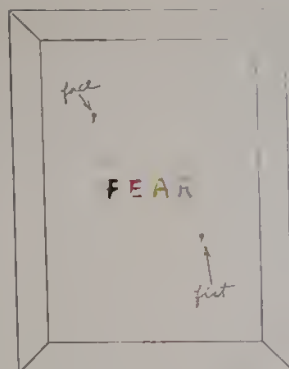


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8



THE DIAGRAM OF BOTTOMLESS

1 5 3 4 2 0 1 0 0



88% 10:40PM 100 ft/sec



WHERE'S THE PUNCH..



THE INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS
BETWEEN PARALLEL LINES
(EXPANSION AND REDUCTION IN FIVE PARTS)

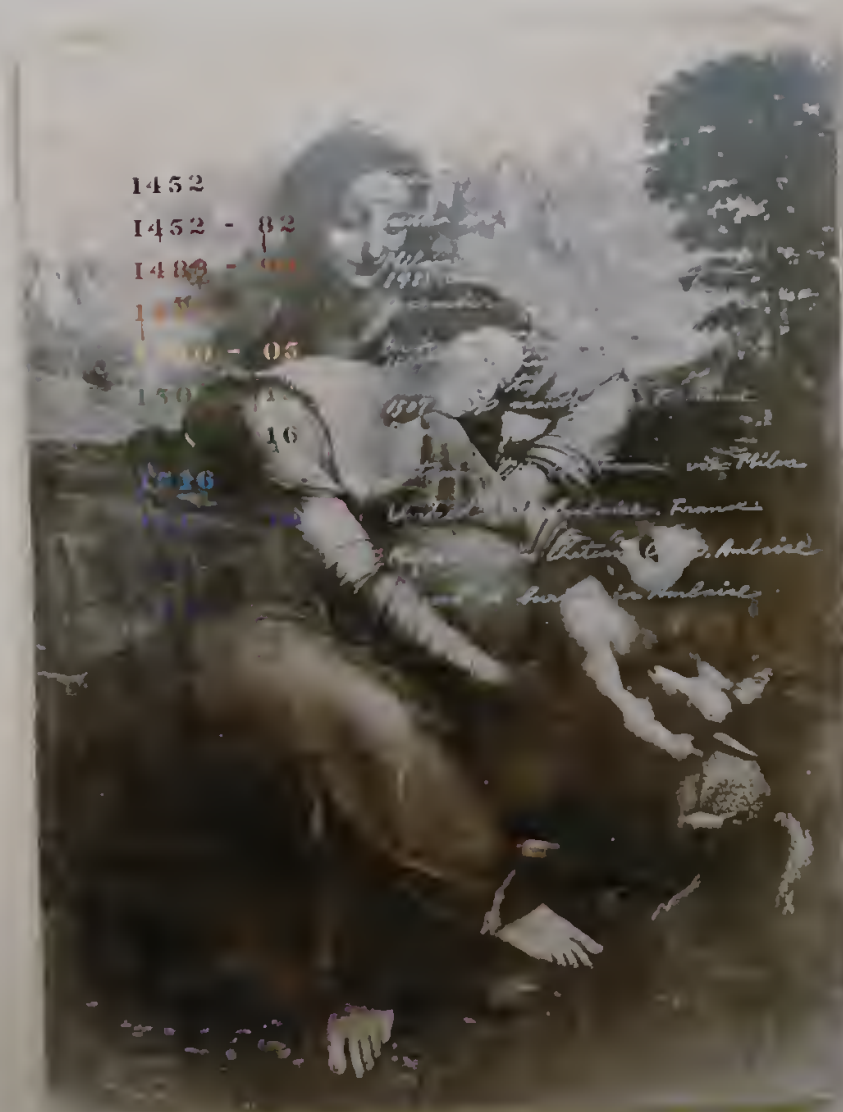


PULL THEN PUNCH

7. Splitting of Meaning

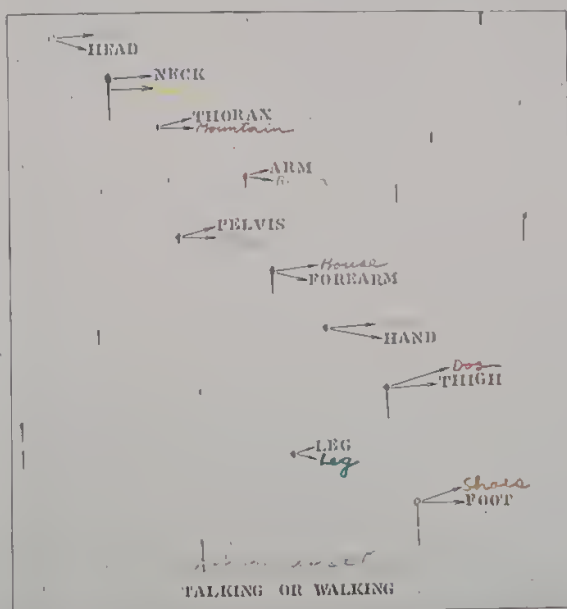
7 SPLITTING OF MEANING

EXERCISES TO DEMONSTRATE THE SEPARATION, DISJUNCTION, DISASSOCIATION, ABSTRACTION, BRANCHING AND RAMIFICATIONS PERTAINING TO SIGNIFICATION. ADDITIONAL EXERCISES MAY ATTEMPT TO INDUCE FURTHER "UNNATURAL" SPLITTING.



PORTRAIT OF MONA LISA (SEE ABOVE)
 BY *La Gioconda*

THIS IS ABOUT TO SPLIT

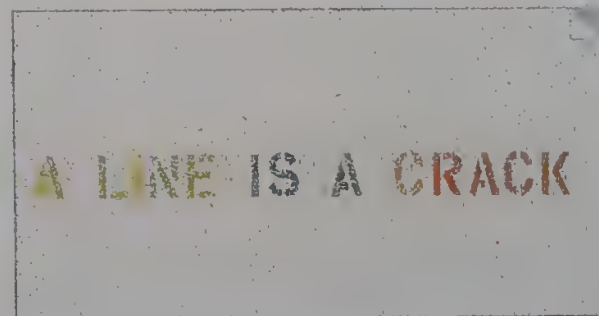


72

A

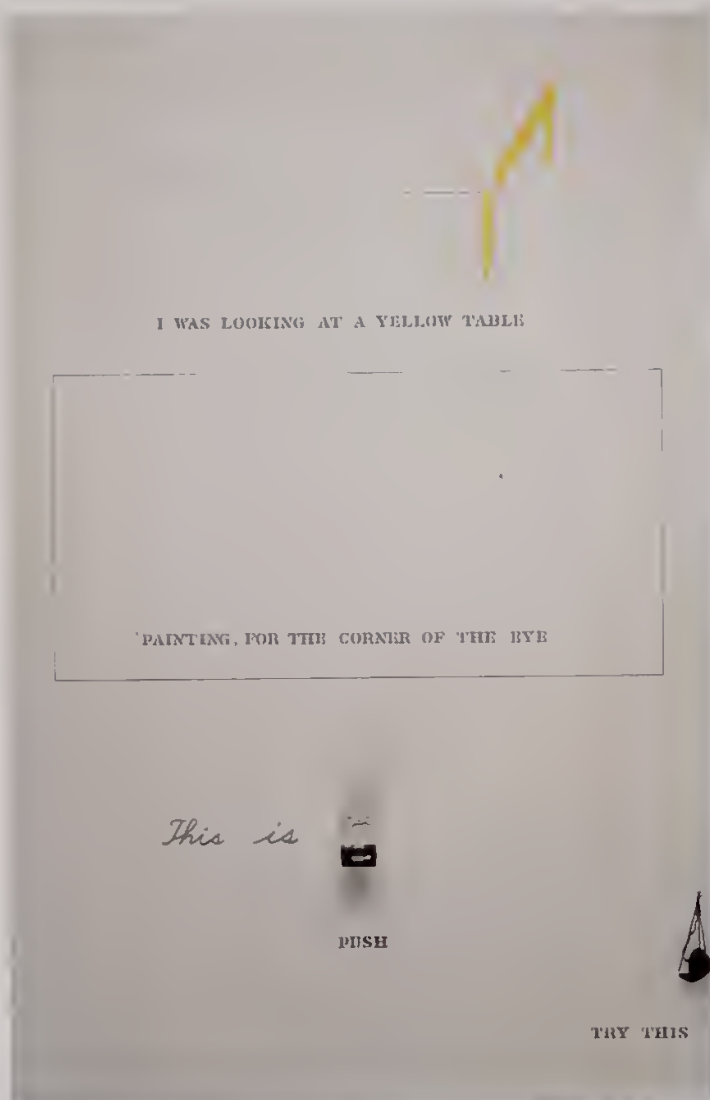


WEBSTER'S NEW TWENTIETH CENTURY DICTIONARY

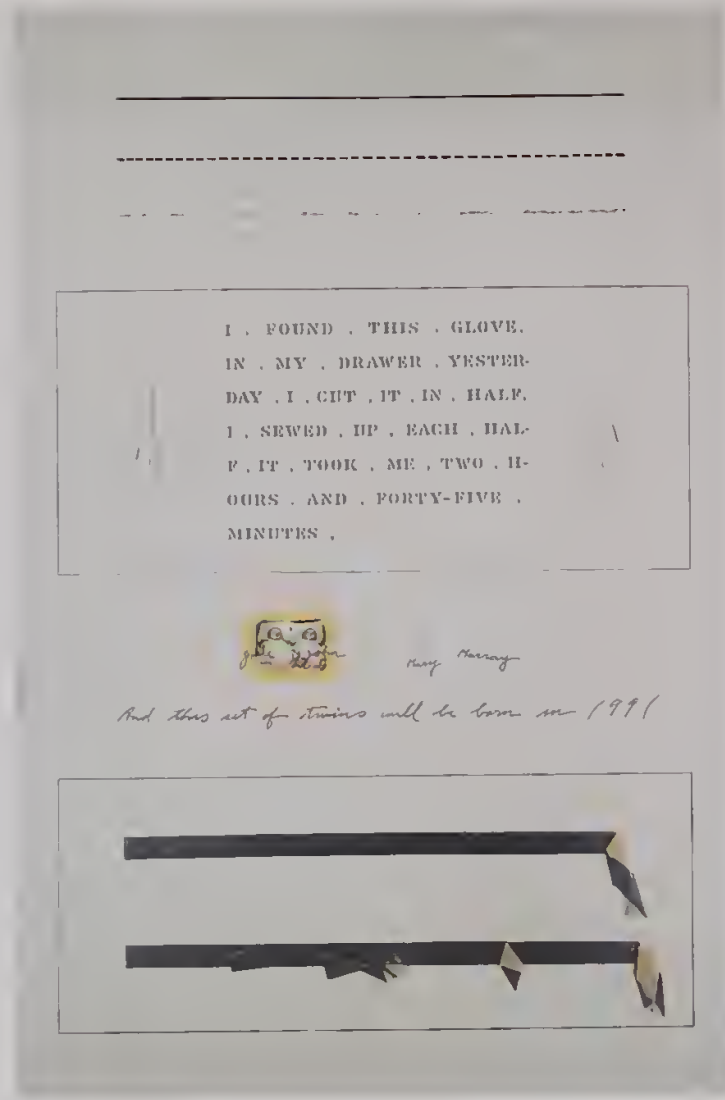


SAY *one* THINK *two*.

73



74

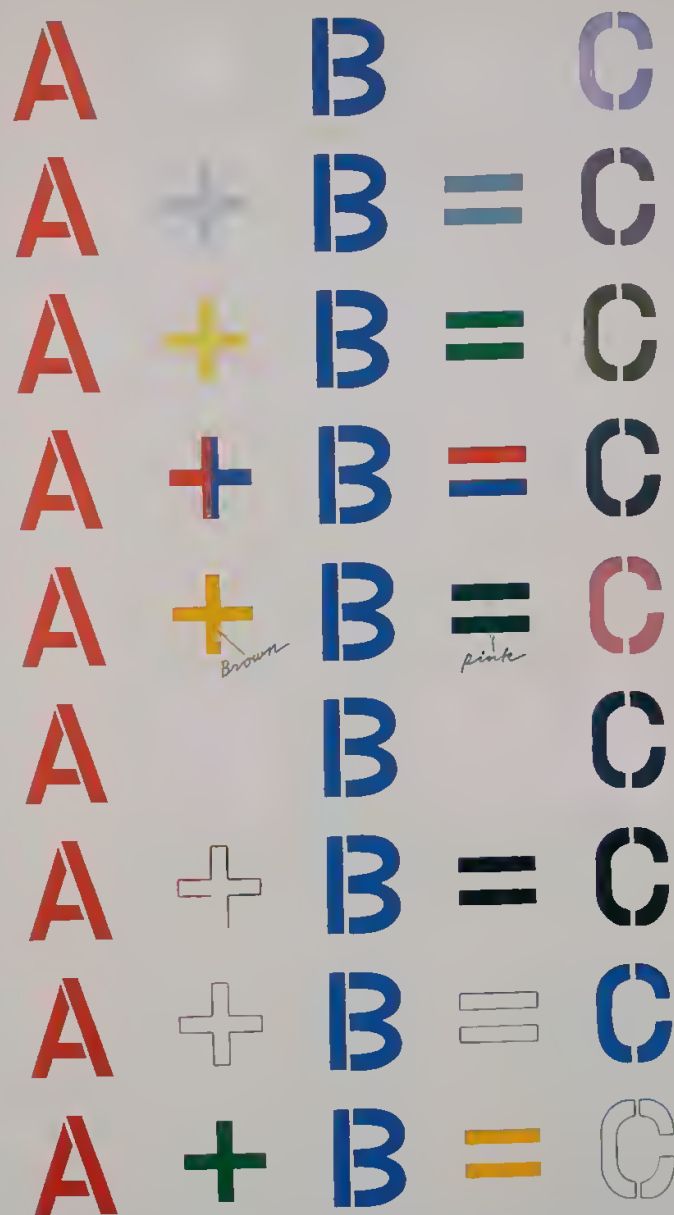


75

8. Reassembling

8 REASSEMBLING

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ELEMENTS OF REASSEMBLY AND
OF THE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS OF THESE IN ORDER TO
CHANGE USAGE

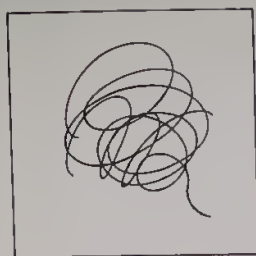


TO WHAT EXTENT IS $=$ A FUNCTION OF $+$?

The range of values for each $+$ and $=$ is wide open as long as the above relations hold.
Other considerations are: $A + + + + B = C$; $A + B = C$

Color, positional changes in A, B

If $+$ is ten years (minutes) ahead of $=$
Or a shift in any other dimension



A



B

PERCEIVE A AS B

IMMEDIATELY UPON RECOGNITION OF THIS PROBLEM, SOLUTION MAY BE PROVIDED (TRIGGERED BY UNDERLYING SIMILARITIES?) BY AN INSTANTANEOUS DIVERSION OF A INTO B. IF NOT, THE FOLLOWING EXERCISES MAY AID SUBSEQUENT TRANSFORMATIONS

PREPARATIONS OR ELEMENTS FOR REASSEMBLY

1 DIFFUSION



diffuse into



diffuse into

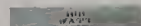


diffuse into

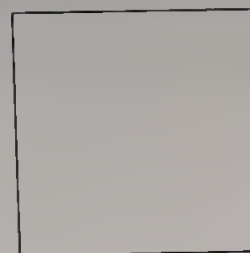


diffuse into

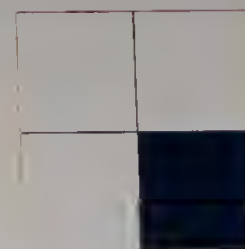
diffuse into



Cause light to be diffused around each figure according to whalings?



A



B

2 REMOVAL

TRANSPOSE, SEPARATE, D
ISPLACE, WITHDRAW, CHA
NGE, DEDUCT, REMOVE, E
MPT, TRANSLANT, TAK
E OFF, SUBTRACT, GOOD -
BYE, ADJUST, TRANSF
ER, BE GONE, PULL OFF, T
RANSMIT, PUSH OFF, BY

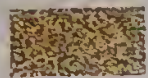


A

B

FOR DIAGRAMS OF A AND B REFER BACK TO FIRST
PANEL (DIFFUSION)

3 REDUCTION



HOT
LONG
HAND
LIGHT



What are these ?

What is this ?

12 o'clock

1969

STAND BETWEEN EITHER SET OF LINES

* See Expansion and Reduction (NOT)
** One reduced use as many X's as needed to make B

PREPARATIONS OR ELEMENTS FOR REASSEMBLY (continued)

4 STRETCHING

A

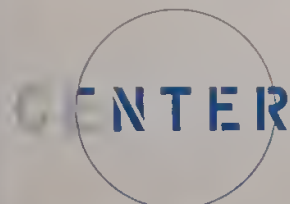
B

The stretching of A with the stretching of B along this line.

5 COVERING



Left this



OUR EYES



FRONT



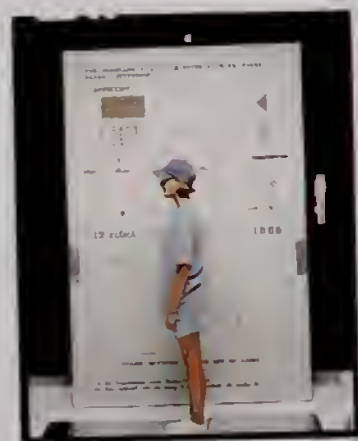
FRONT



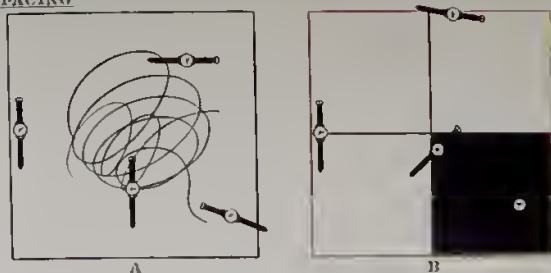
BACK

84

85



6 PACING



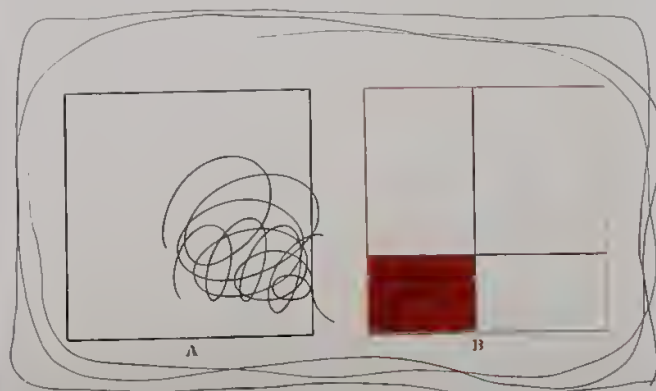
A

B



Observation schemes - the speed of shift is roughly indicated by length of line segments

7 LAYERING

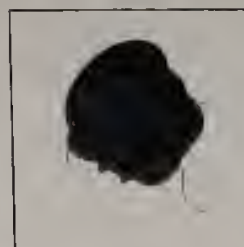


A

B

To slice through the thickened (established) perceptions of A and B to find drawing off points (appropriate layers) which tend to approach one another

8 FILLING AND CASTING



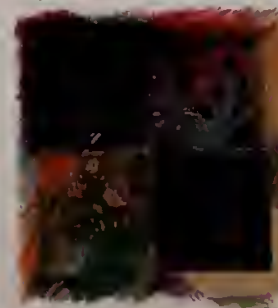
A



B



A



B

9 MEASURING (JUDGING)



DECIDE WHICH EACH OF THESE RESEMBLES MOST A OR II



WHICH WOULD BE MORE USEFUL FOR MEASURING THIS A OR II?

ESTIMATE THE EFFECT OF:

diffusion × diffusion - diffusion

removal + covering

pacing + layering - filling and casting

reduction + stretching



A'



II'

PERCEIVE A' AS II'

HOW MUCH MORE DIFFICULT IS THIS PROBLEM THAN ITS PROTOTYPE?

Look at A with a loud voice

A is B

What is the farthest distance possible between A and II?

Roll A into II, relax A into II, dip A into II, etc

Which took longer to make A or B?

9. Reversibility

9 REVERSIBILITY

TO STRETCH THE CONCEPT OF BEING ABLE TO BE REVERSED WHILE EXPLORING THE FLEXIBILITY OF SUCH NOTIONS AS POSITION, CHANGE, SYMMETRY, ETC. (ALTHOUGH THIS IS CLOSELY RELATED TO SEVERAL OTHER SUBDIVISIONS IT IS FELT THAT A SEPARATE INVESTIGATION MAY PROVE USEFUL)



5



A MNEMONIC DEVICE

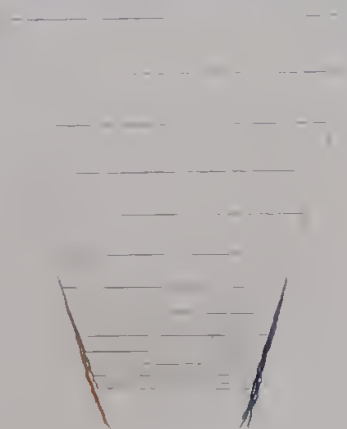


LOOK AT THIS FOR MORE THAN ONE MINUTE TO KEEP YOUR OWN NAME



A MNEMONIC DEVICE FOR FORGETTING

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20



WHAT HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?
 WHAT HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN?
 WILL YOU WERE?
 WILL YOU REMEMBERED?

92

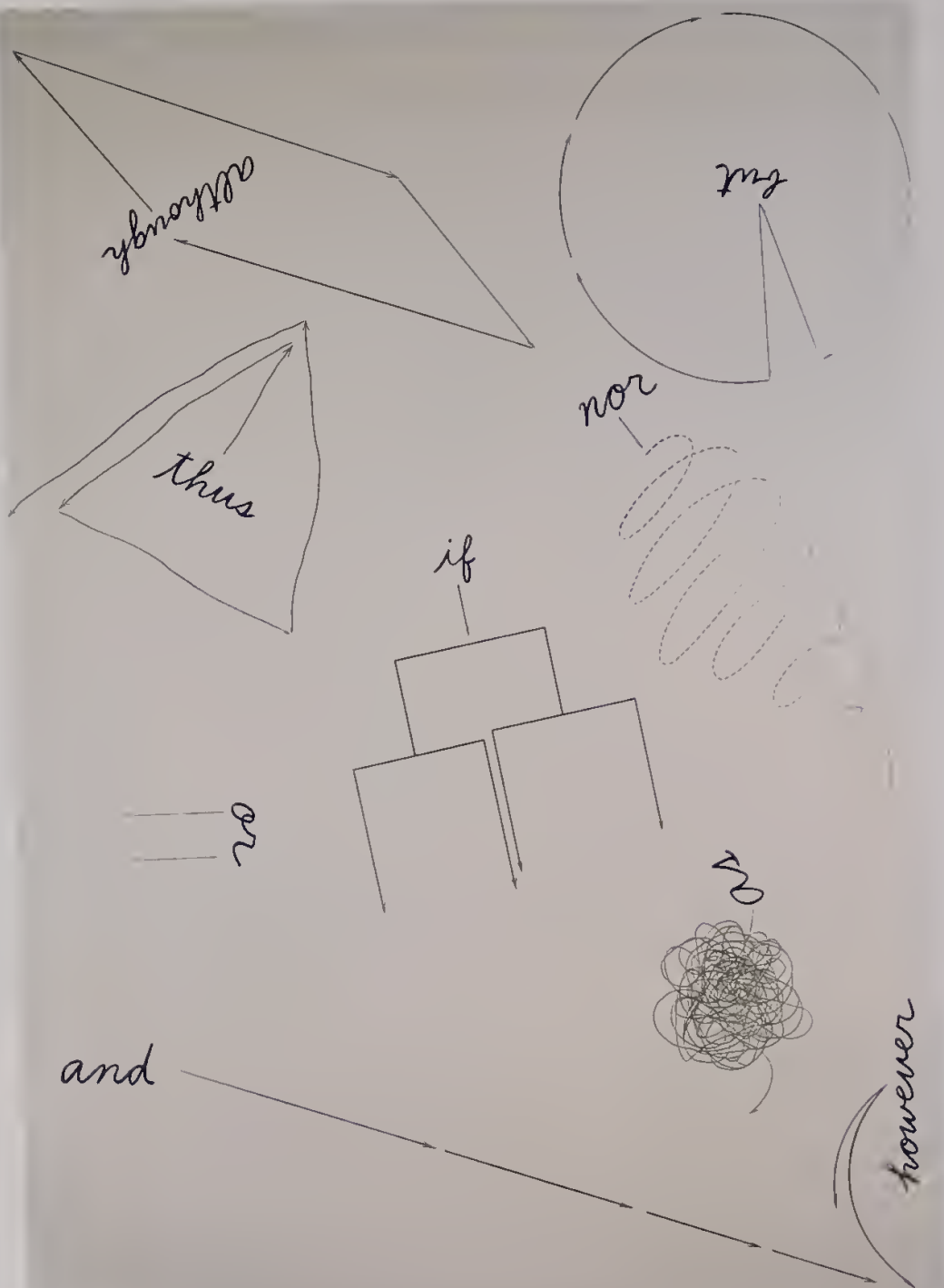


HOW IS EVERYTHING?



SUBJECT TO REVERSALS

93

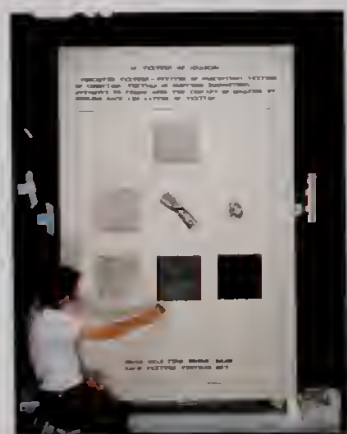
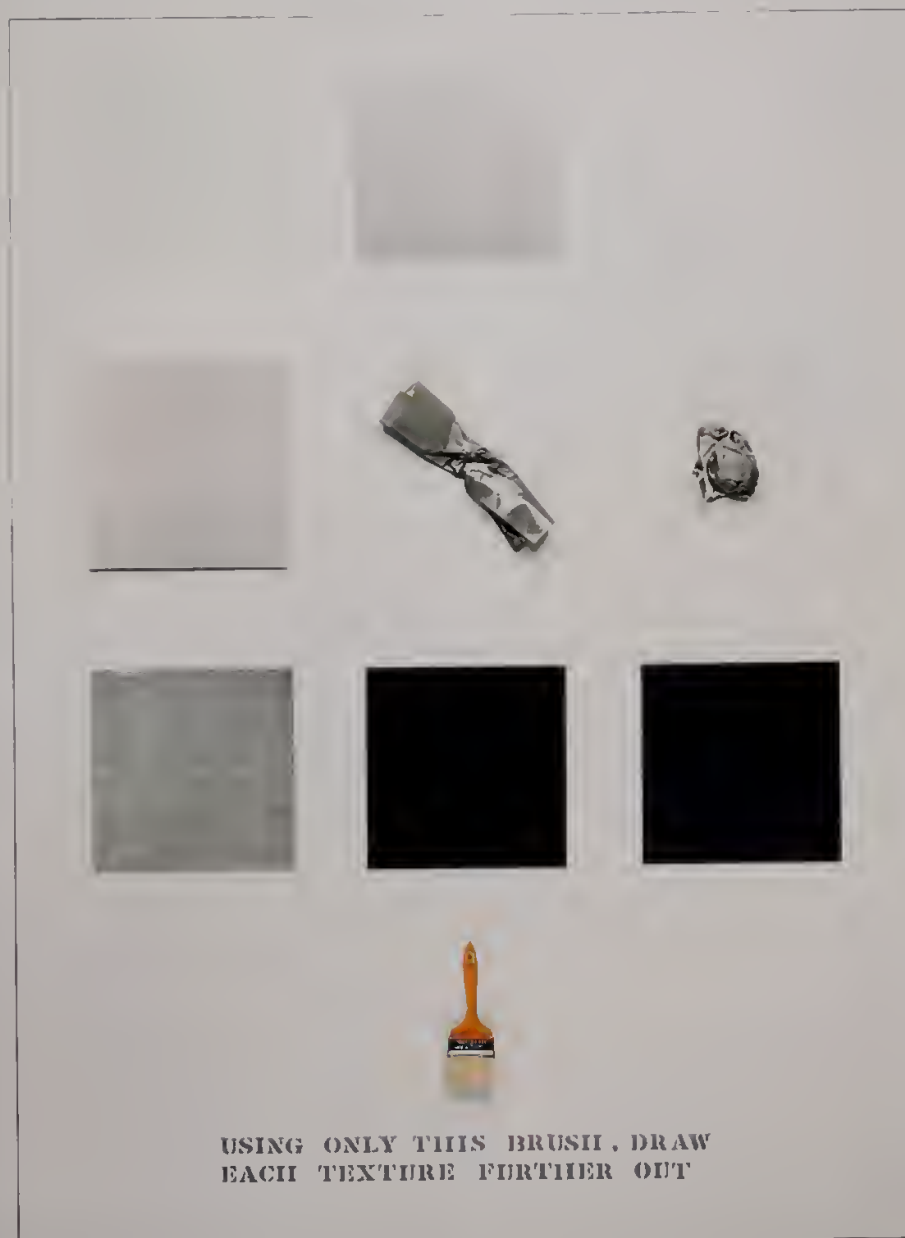


SHALL WE DANCE OR MAY I COME IN

10. Texture of Meaning

10 TEXTURE OF MEANING

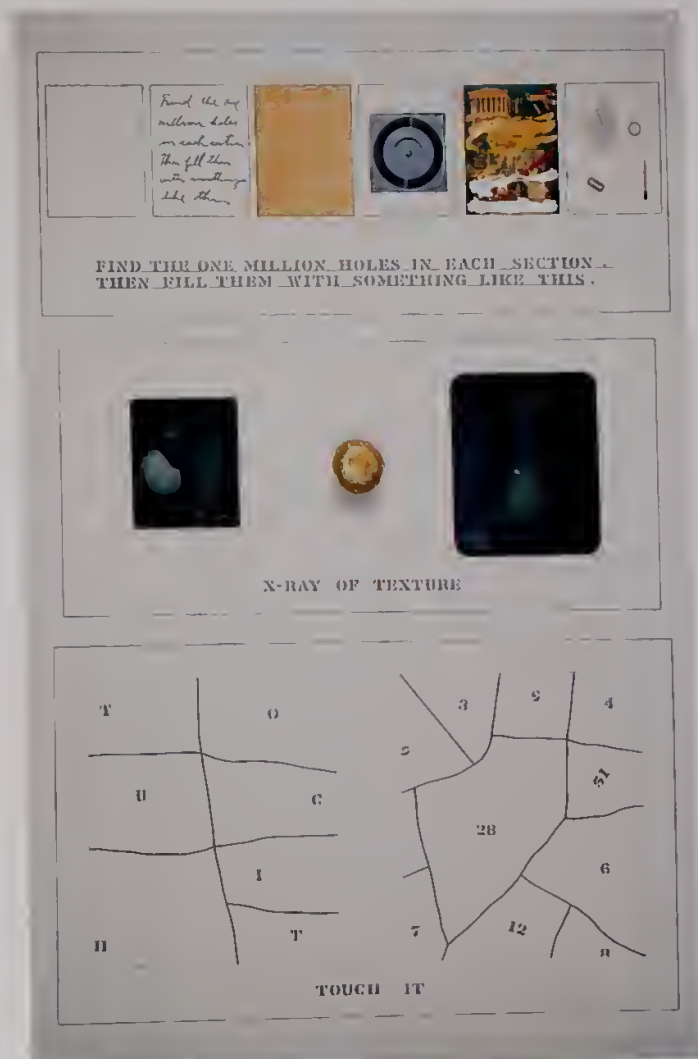
PERCEIVED TEXTURE—TEXTURE OF PERCEPTION; TEXTURE
OF COGNITION; TEXTURE OF EMOTIONS (DISPOSITION).
ATTEMPTS TO THROW OPEN THE CONCEPT OF MEANING BY
PEELING BACK THE LAYERS OF TEXTURE.



10 1



102



103





10 4



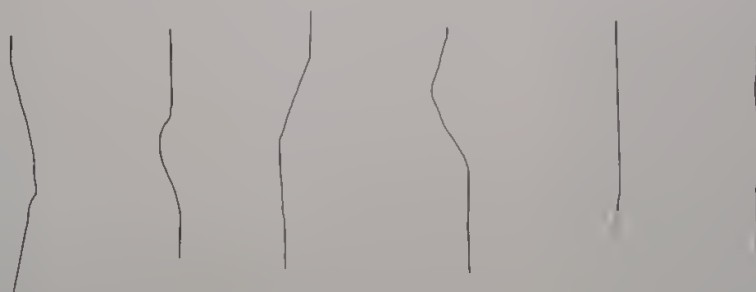
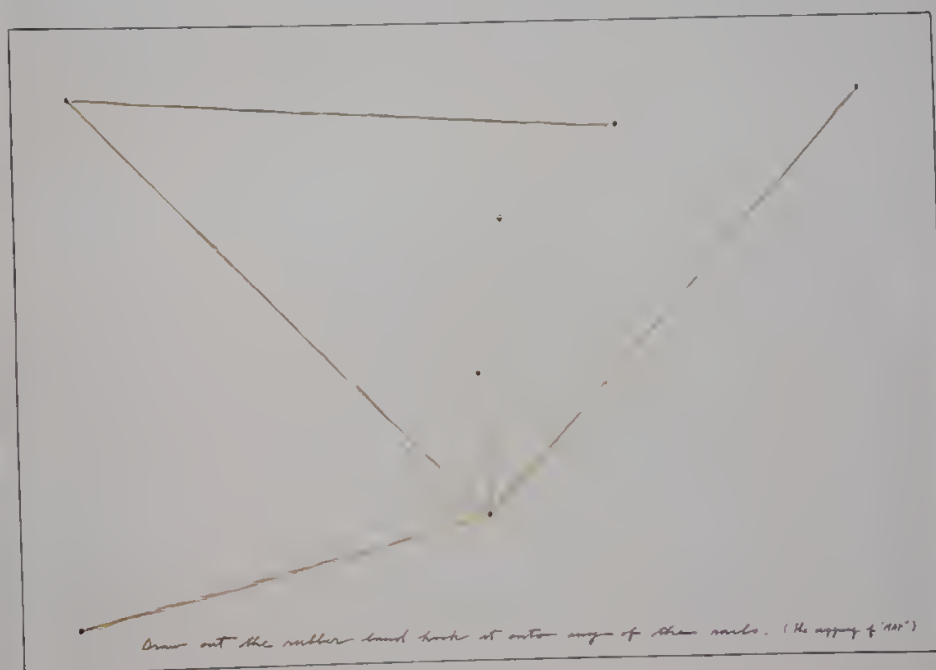
10 5



11. Mapping of Meaning

11 MAPPING OF MEANING

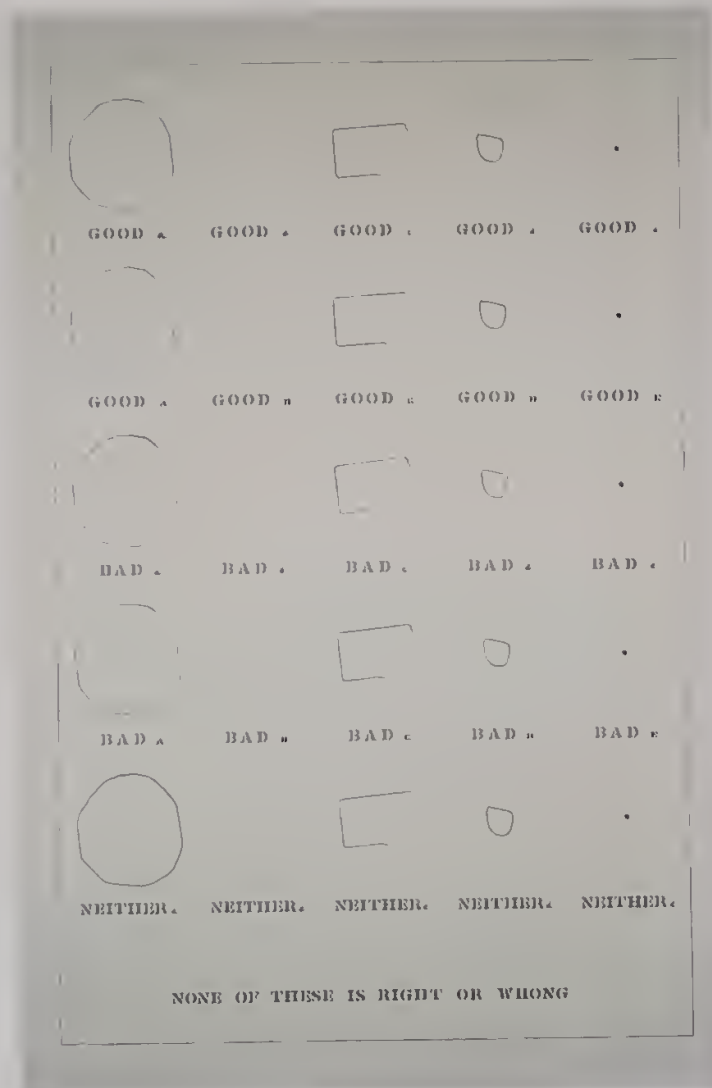
CONSIDER THAT ANY REPRESENTATION OR SYSTEM MAY BE USED AS A MAP WHEN PAIRED WITH OR PLOTTED AGAINST AN OBJECT OR AN ENVIRONMENT. THIS SECTION DEALS WITH REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PROCESS OF MAPPING ITSELF; THE DOUBLE ASPECT OF SIGN; THE RELATION OF DENOTATION TO CONNOTATION (PROPERTY OF MEANING); THE RELATIONS OF SIGNIFIEDS TO EACH OTHER. USE WILL BE MADE OF PROJECTION, DISTORTION AND 'NEGATIVE' MAPPING IN AN EFFORT TO SURROUND AND SUGGEST THE ARRANGEMENTS OF AREAS OF MEANING.



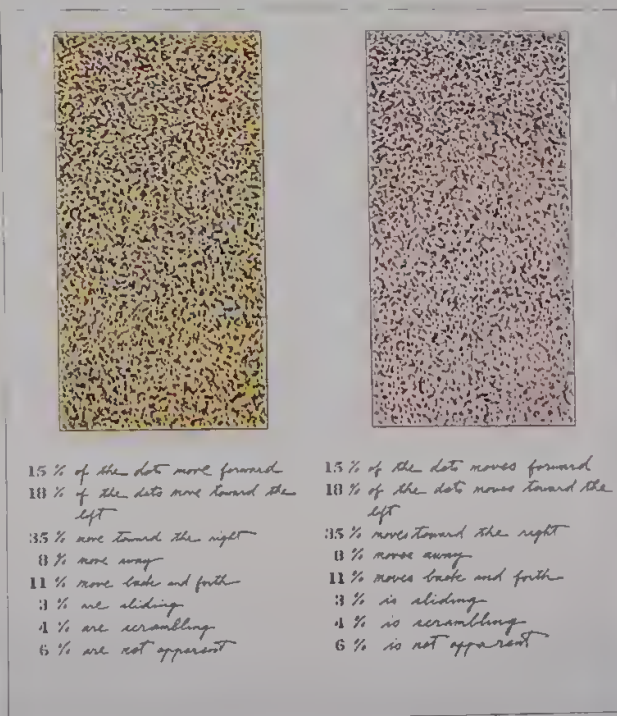
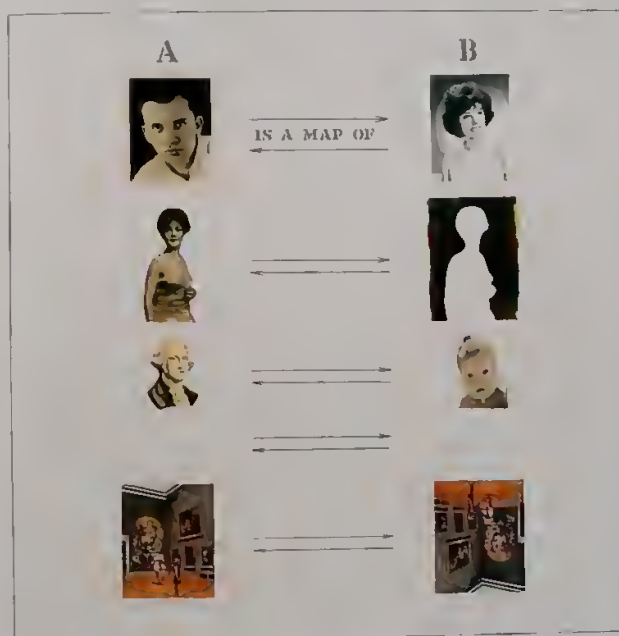
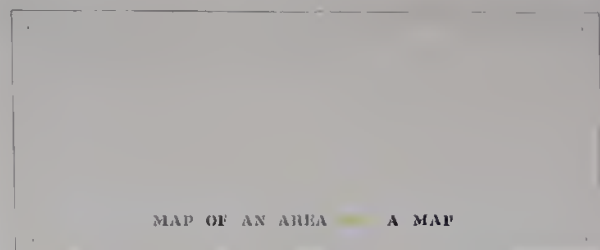
A LINE AND FIVE MAPS

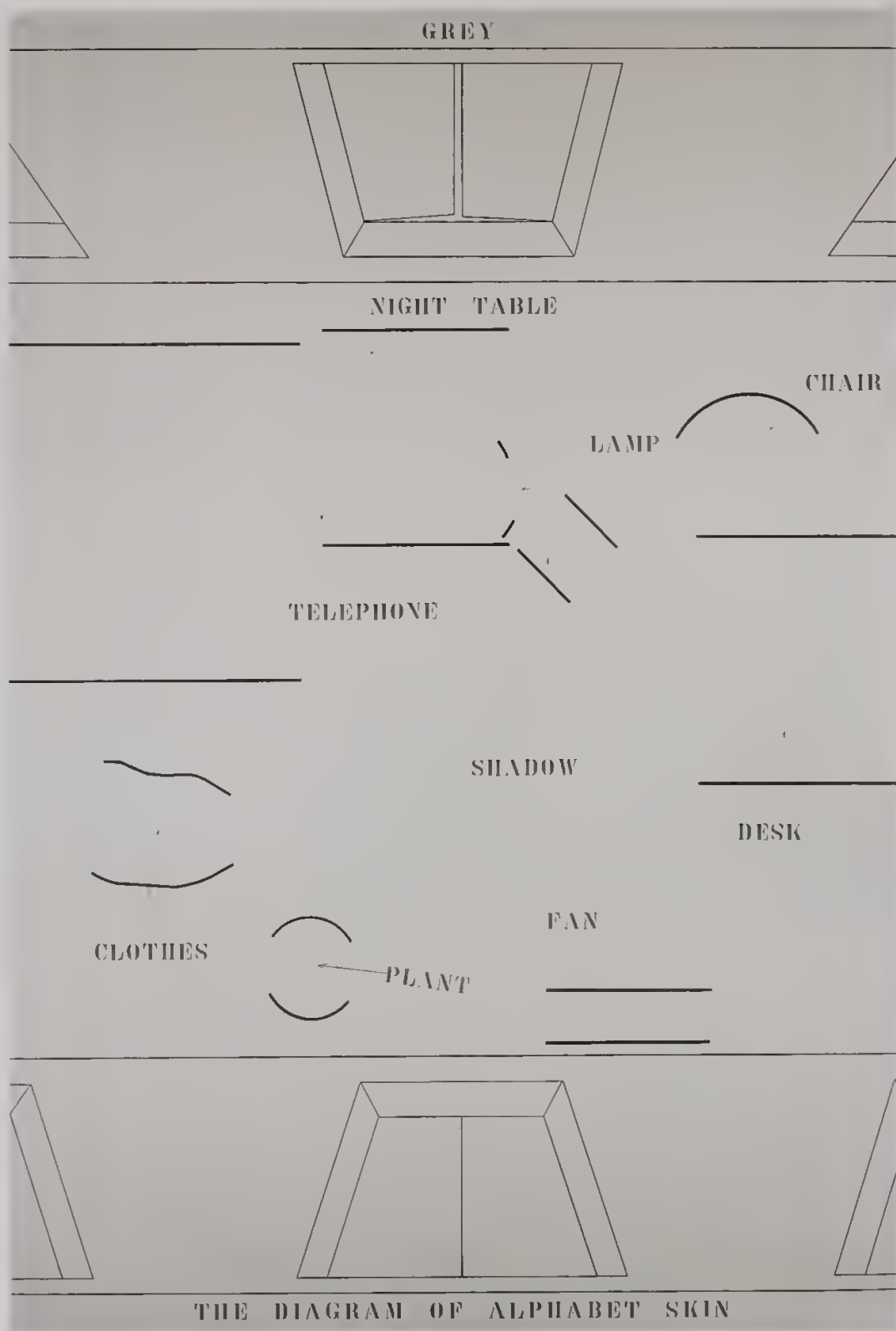


11 2



11 3





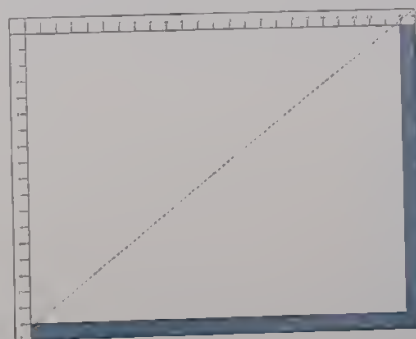
12. The Feeling of Meaning

12 THE FEELING OF MEANING

TOWARD A DEMONSTRATION OF THE AFFECTIVE ROLE IN COGNITION THROUGH AN INVESTIGATION OF AFFECTIVE VALUE AS A MEASURING DEVICE; EXERCISES FOR THE MOVEMENT OF EMOTIONS IN AN ATTEMPT TO SET PARAMETERS FOR FEELING THROUGH CONTORTION, OVERLAY, REVERSAL AND OTHER DISRUPTIVE SYSTEMS. ASSUMING THE VALIDITY OF THE JAMES — LONGE THEORY, IF THERE IS AN INTERNAL SENSORY BASIS FOR FEELING, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS PERCEPTION ?



*If possible, fold along the dotted line
once folded, think of what is inside*



*If possible, fold along the dotted line
once folded, think of what is inside.*

[illegible]

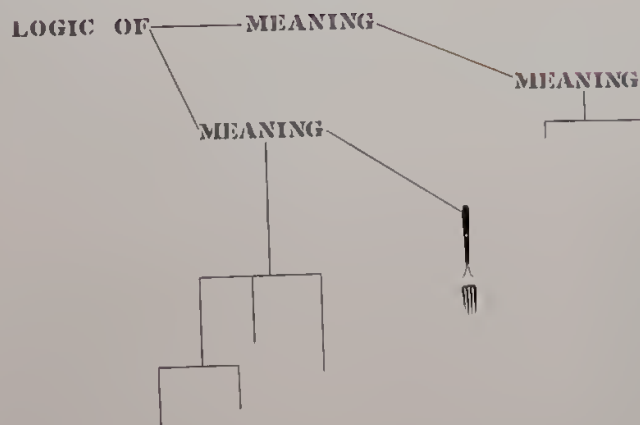
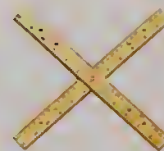
13. Logic of Meaning

13 LOGIC OF MEANING

VIEWING LOGIC AS THE ORDER AND/OR CONTEXT IN WHICH ANY MEANING OCCURS, TO STUDY ITS FUNCTION AS A STRUCTURING ELEMENT (POINTS OF APPLICATION TO SOMETHING) AND SUGGEST ALTERNATIVES



_____ *Make this line more abstract*



KEEP THE END IN SIGHT

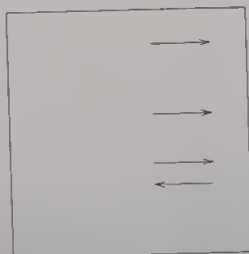
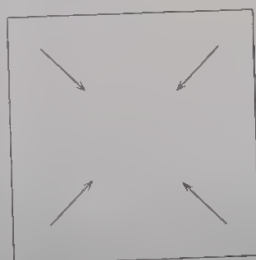
WHAT'S THE POINT ?



COLOR SAMPLES



WHOSE BLUE



ESTABLISH A COMMON MEETING POINT
FOR EACH SET OF ARROWS



USE ANY COMBINATION OF THE SETS BELOW TO DEMONSTRATE
THE LOGICAL CONNECTIONS OF THE ONE ABOVE



C

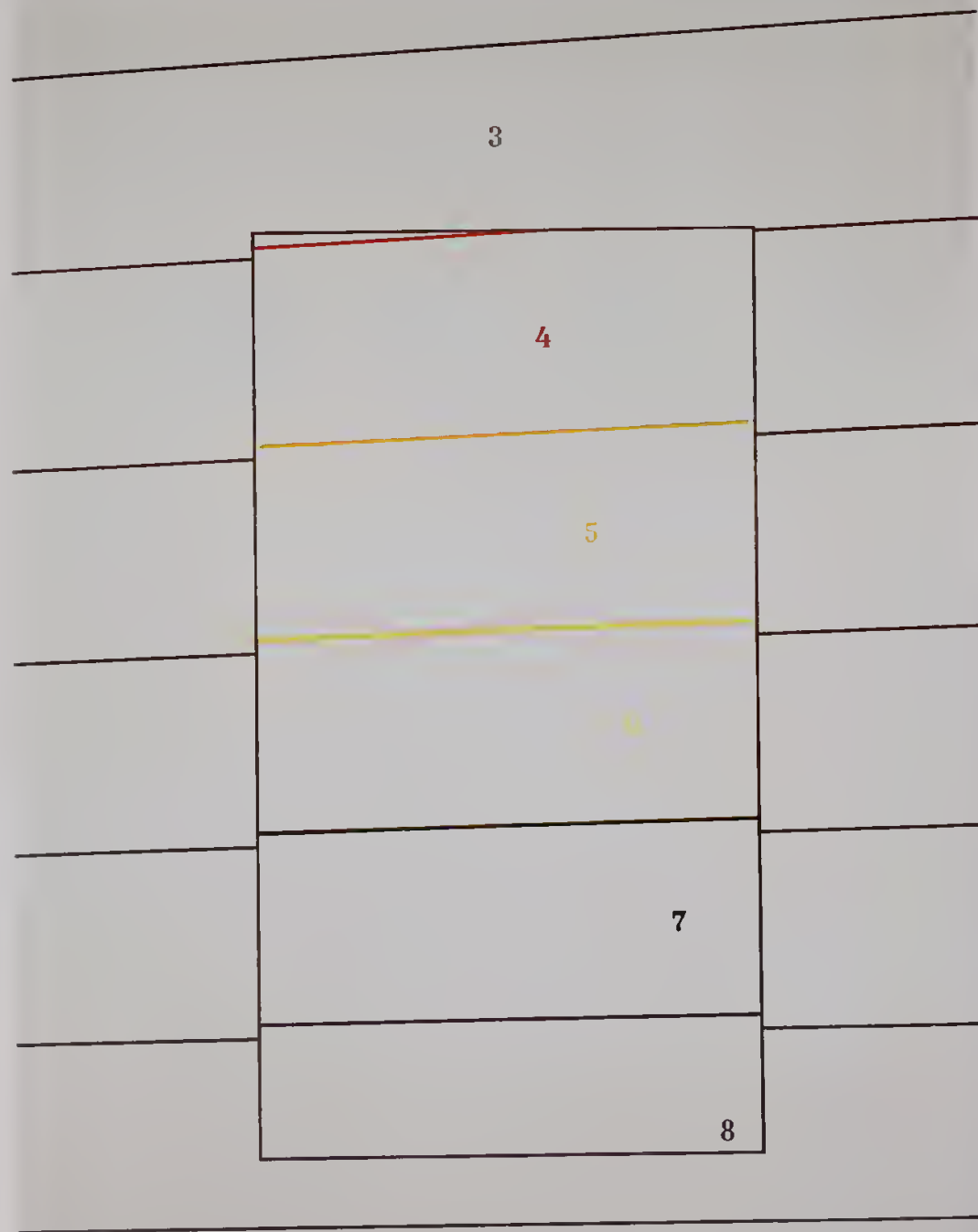
A

B

D

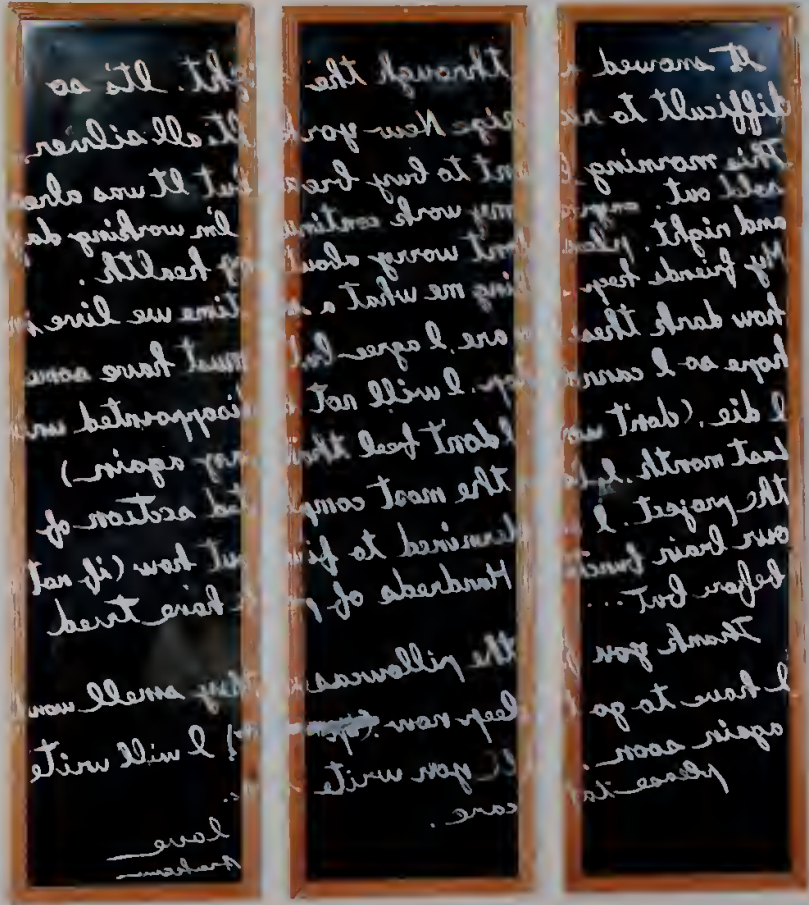
133

132

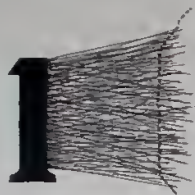


14. Construction
of the Memory
of Meaning

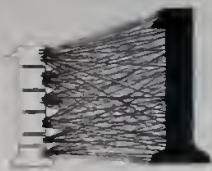
14 CONSTRUCTION OF THE MEMORY OF MEANING
A STUDY OF MEMORY: ITS OPERATIONS, ITS SCOPE, ITS ROLE
IN THE REALIZATION OF MEANING. TOWARD THE CONSTRUCTION
OF A TOTAL SITUATION IN WHICH MEMORY CAN REMEMBER
ITSELF (ITS OWN OPERATIONS)



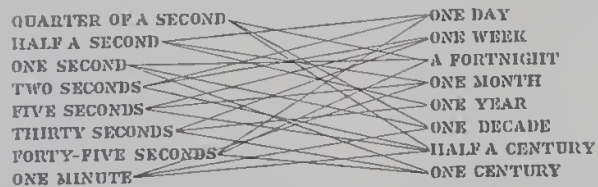
NIGHT



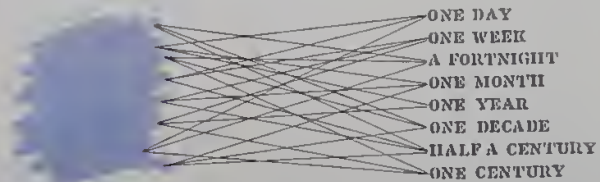
SCATTER EFFECT NO. 1



RESOLUTION NO. 1



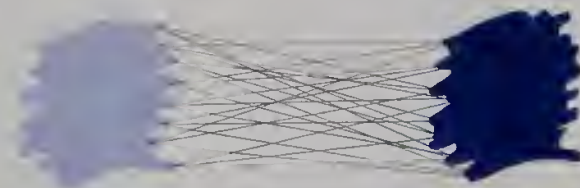
INDICATION OF DURATION IN PRESENT TIME FOR MEMORIES OF PAST PERIODS



BLUE INTO THE PAST (OUT OF THE BLUE)

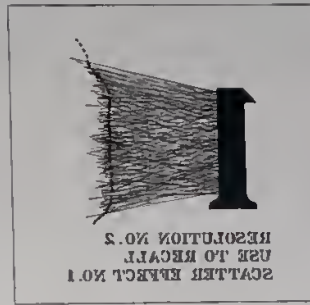
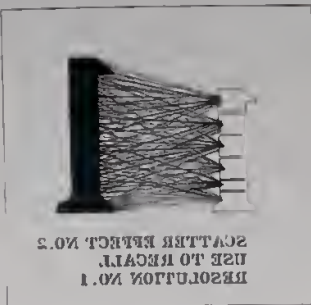
QUARTER OF A SECOND
HALF A SECOND
ONE SECOND
TWO SECONDS
FIVE SECONDS
THIRTY SECONDS
FORTY-FIVE SECONDS
ONE MINUTE

DURATION IN PRESENT TIME FOR MEMORIES OF BLUE

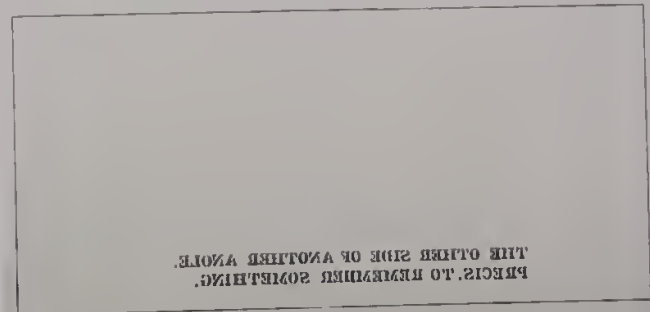
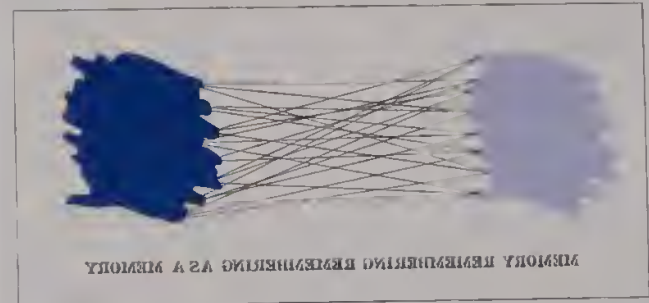
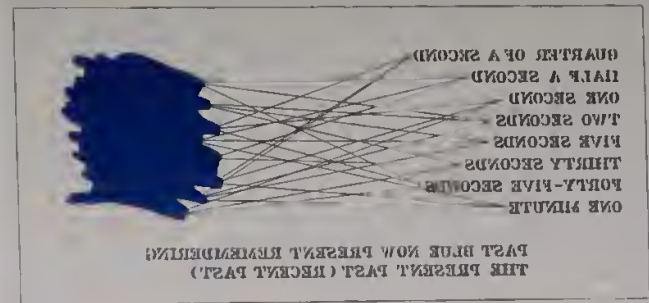
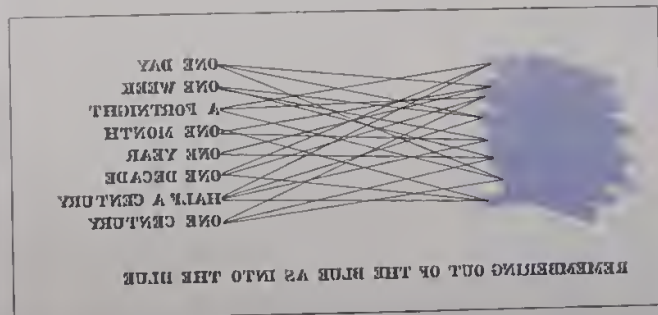
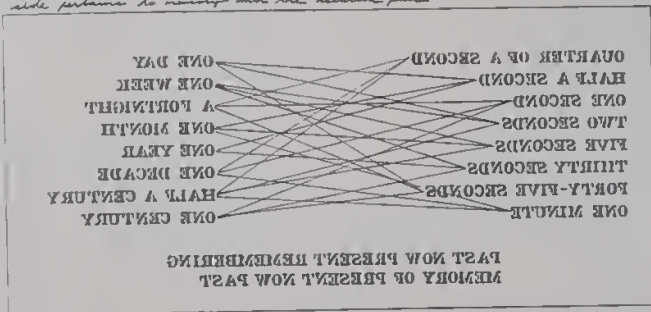


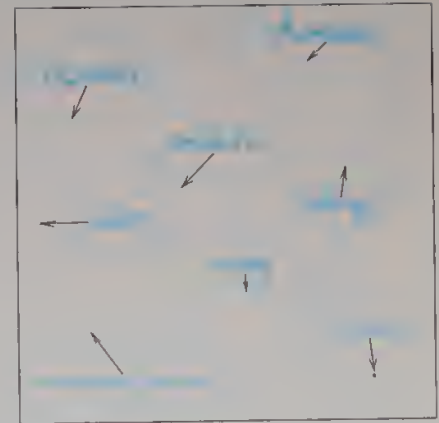
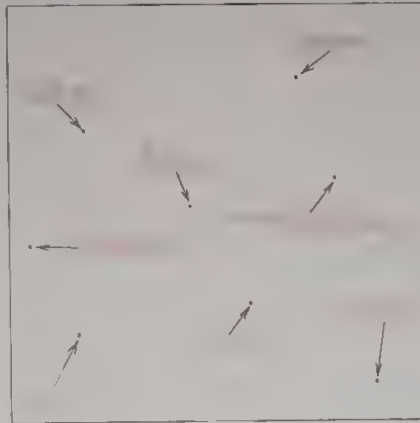
BLUE INTO BLUE. PRESENT INTO PAST. RELATION OF REMEMBERING TO MEMORY.

ANOTHER ANGLE. SYNOPSIS

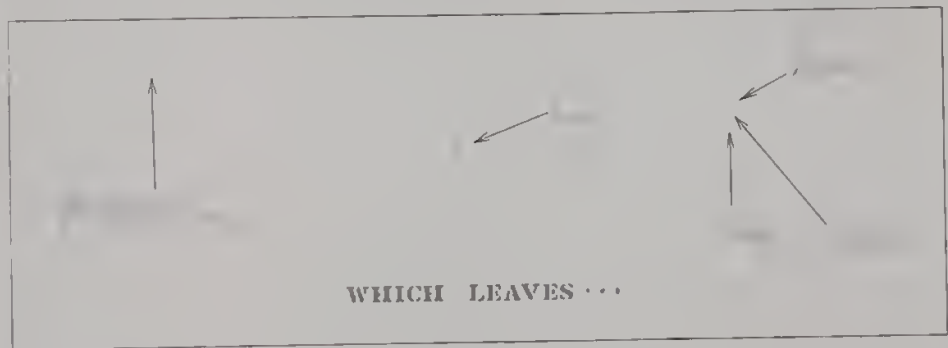


Left side continues to represent the act of remembering and the present while right side pertains to memory and the relative past

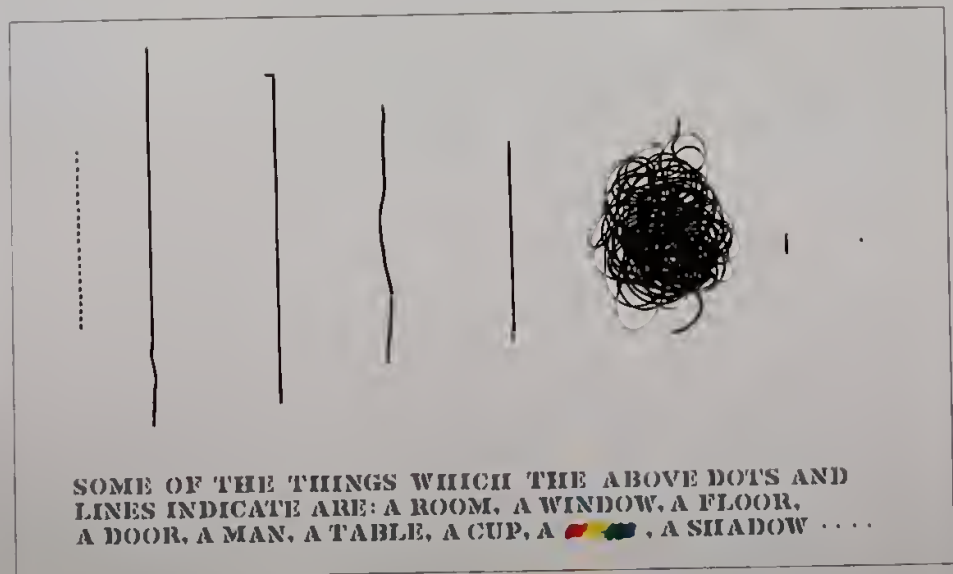





REVOLVE RESOLVE



WHICH LEAVES ...



SOME OF THE THINGS WHICH THE ABOVE DOTS AND
LINES INDICATE ARE: A ROOM, A WINDOW, A FLOOR,
A DOOR, A MAN, A TABLE, A CUP, A , A SHADOW

15. Meaning of Intelligence

15 MEANING OF INTELLIGENCE

AN EXPLORATION OF WHAT IS MEANT BY THE STATEMENT
OF AN INTELLIGENCE, OF WHAT TWO OR MORE ELEMENTS
(ACTIVITIES?) ARE ALIGNED WHEN SOME X IS DECLARED
INTELLIGIBLE AND OF THE POSSIBLE (IMPOSSIBLE) REASONS
BEHIND (IN FRONT OF?) THIS.

—

AN AREA OF INTELLIGENCE
(RIGHT AND WRONG)

—

AN AREA OF INTELLIGENCE
(WRONG AND RIGHT)



FIND  LIMIT OF ERROR

THE *is to* _____ as OF *is to* _____

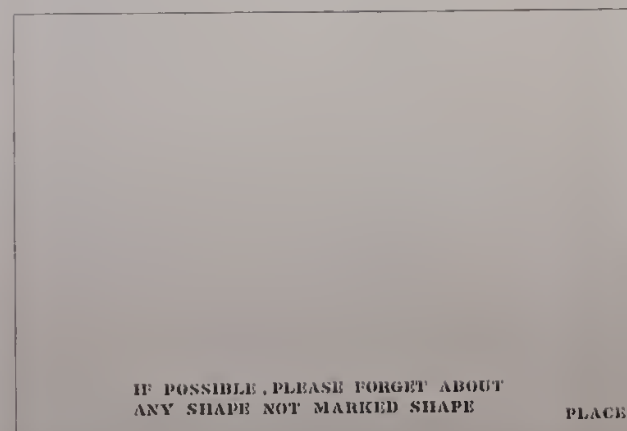
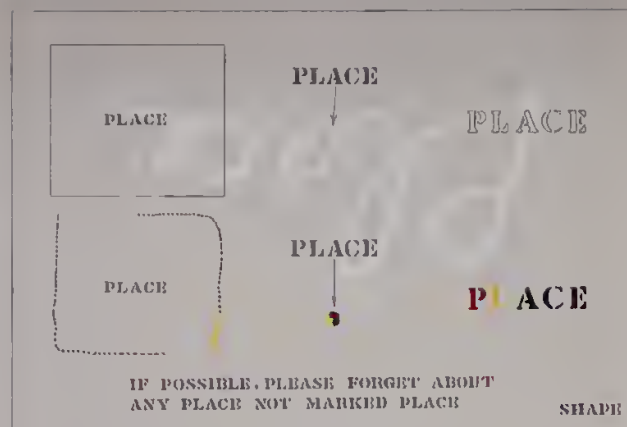


() FIRST SIGN OF SAPIENCE (ON REFLECTION)



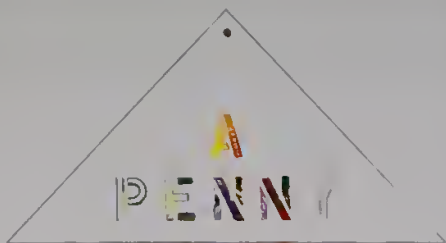
USE TWO OR THREE DIFFERENT WAYS

15.2



ABOUT

15.3



WHAT IS THIS

WHAT IS THIS

WHAT IS THIS



NOOSE FOR A COCKROACH

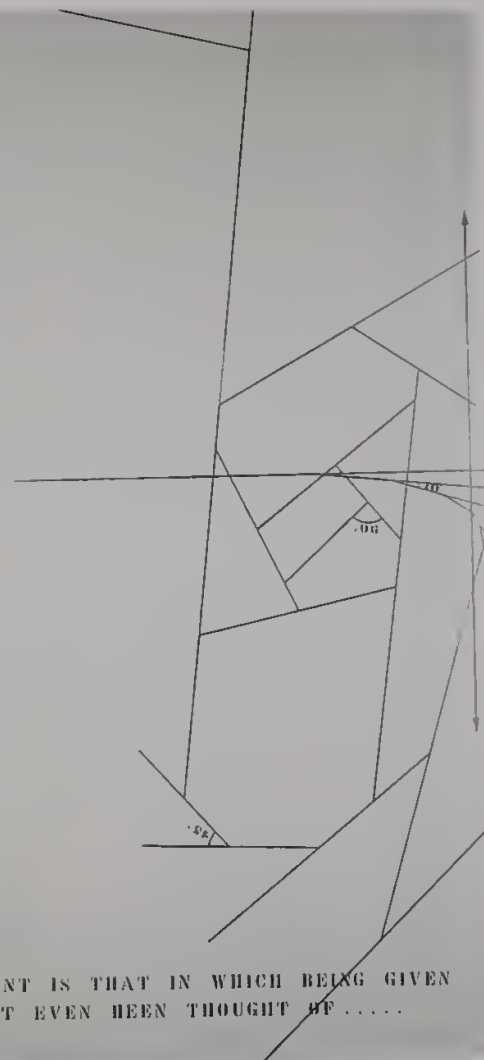


I DON'T GIVE UP

WHAT IS NOT MISSING?

PLEASE DON'T LAUGH

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WHOSE MOMENT IS THAT IN WHICH BEING GIVEN
HAS NOT YET EVEN BEEN THOUGHT OF

155

16. Review and Self-Criticism

MAKER, BETWEEN ABOVE AND BELOW

Where edge blank eddies
The texture of receivability

By

Vectors may saturate
Pieces of layered approximations received

The surfacing of a parallel drift
generating a sense of out and in,
angular spin, the depth-maker of a surface

Distance of time, prehole.
Tunneling volumes of degrees as if
broken tubes
Within but between the numbers being counted

The setting of a broken rail
The enormous movability of a sucking passage (omnidirectional)
random, partial shrinking

Appearance of some profile junctures, some linear burps
Many

Volumes exchanged, a speed of shifting

Place for construction of a core of flexibility only

Diffuse receding that parallels and contours
waiting texture

The unique range of elasticities of
impressionable stretching, not yet texture

The regulating of reflection, deflection, inflection

Coalescence of sound joints, guides

Realization of mounting and push of duration (instant group)

Both senders and receivers, configurational coverings on
all and any scale

Pull of breath

To keep the end in sight; balance

As always the necessity of out of the blue, "to" and "from"

A sudden drop into a scale of action

The call of continuity

(1973)

16 1-16 2



The Mechanism of Meaning

An ongoing project, Arokawa and Madeline Gins's *The Mechanism of Meaning* began to take shape in 1963, when the earliest panels were made, and was completed, for the most part, by 1973. All panels in the first fifteen subdivisions date from 1963–73. The two panels in subdivision 16 *Review and Self-Criticism*, dating from 1996, link *The Mechanism of Meaning* to Arokawa and Gins's recent work on reversible destiny architecture.

To date, two editions of *The Mechanism of Meaning* have been made. The edition featured in the present exhibition is reproduced in this volume. [The other edition was acquired in 1989 by the Sezon Foundation, Tokyo.]

Many of the panels incorporate collaged elements, including three-dimensional objects. For all panels, the dimensions of the canvas are 96 x 68 inches.

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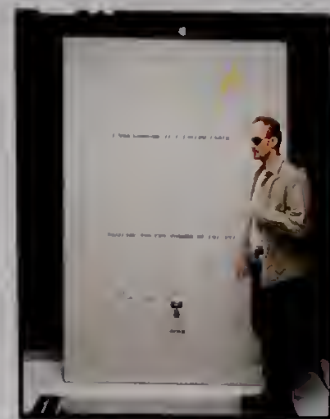
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top to bottom
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Testing the Limits of Brain Plasticity

GEORGE LAKOFF

Or,
Why Is
There
a Wall
Down
the
Middle
of the
Tub?

FERRETS LOOKING LOUDLY HEAR THE LIGHT

In a series of unusual experiments, scientists have rewired the brains of newborn ferrets so the animals, in a sense, hear things they would normally see. The research provides the strongest confirmation yet for a theory of brain function that deems the visual, auditory, and other “higher” parts of the brain as fundamentally alike in computational function—resembling, at least in early stages of development, interchangeable parts.

Moreover, the research supports the notion that these higher, or cortical, parts of the brain “learn” how to perform many of their sensory or motor functions from early cues in the environment. . . . Mriganka Sur and his coworkers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge rerouted retinal neurons—which normally send sensory data from the eyes to the visual cortex in the brain—in 16 ferrets so that the data went instead to the animals’ auditory cortex[es].

“The basic issue is: Does all cortex perform basically the same operation, and do the different outcomes only depend on putting different inputs in?” . . . The answer appears to be yes, the M.I.T. researchers report in the Dec. 9 *Science*. They found that some cells in the auditory cortex “transform” raw data into “oriented rectangular receptor fields”—a type of patterned response to stimuli that has until now been clearly identified only in the visual cortex. . . . “This means there is nothing intrinsic about the auditory cortex that makes it auditory. . . . It depends on what kind of input it gets” early in life.¹

Think first of yourself as a ferret and of Arakawa and Madeline Gins as testing the limits of brain plasticity. Unable to rearrange your neurons directly, they do the next best thing—they restructure your interaction with the world to give you as much of a new brain as is possible.

But why do you need a new brain? We’ll discuss that presently.

WHY THE SKY ISN’T BLUE

You might think that the sky is blue, that blood is red, that grass is green. Not so. You might think that colors are “in” or “part of” the objects you perceive as colored. It’s not true. Just ask your local neuroscientist.

Colors are created by the color cones in our retinas, by neural circuitry in our brains, by the wavelength reflectances of surfaces, and by local lighting conditions, all interacting. There are no colors in objects themselves, no red in blood, no green in grass. Colors arise from our bodies every bit as much as from the ability of objects to reflect certain wavelengths of light and from surrounding conditions.

We, of course, perceive colors as being in the world. We can’t help it. It’s a consequence of the brains and bodies we have. But we can know that seeing isn’t believing. The sky in itself isn’t blue.

Could we make the sky green and grass blue by rewiring our brains, by redoing the neural connections to the color cones in our retinas? Nobody knows for sure, and it is unlikely to be tested.

But an artist can paint the sky green and the grass blue. The artist can do what the neuroscientist cannot.

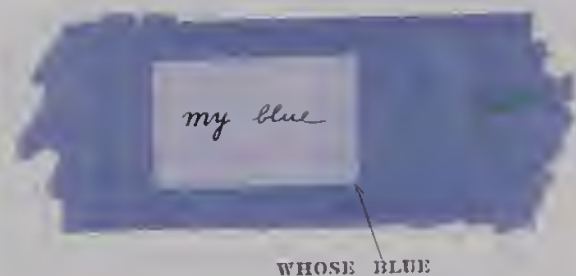
ARE THERE CHAIRS?

In an uninteresting sense, there are. The world contains very different objects that we conceptualize together as being the same kind of thing, and we use the word “chair” to name that kind of thing. But that is mundane.

There is, on the other hand, an interesting sense in which the answer is no, in which there are no chairs.

Suppose you insist, as many philosophers do, on existence as objective, as independent of observers and people interacting with objects.² Such philosophers would say that kinds of things exist only if objects in themselves share properties that make them the same kind of thing. If *chair* is a kind of thing, then chairs exist only if they share properties that distinguish them from every other kind of thing—say from couches or benches or beds or stools. And what they share has to be objective, that is, independent of people who sit in chairs, perceive chairs, or imagine chairs.

However, categories are not just out there in the world independent of observers and actors. We, the actors and observers, with our bodies and



The Mechanism of Meaning, 13. Logic of Meaning, panel 2 (detail)

brains, create those categories. It is we who conceptualize office chairs, armchairs, barber chairs, beanbag chairs, Morris chairs, Eames chairs, massage chairs, and electric chairs as all being the same kind of thing—chairs. It is because we all have the right kinds of bodies and do the same things with them—namely, in this case, sitting down using the appropriate motor programs—that chairs form a single category for us. Without us, they are just different things. If all life ceased to exist and the objects remained, chairs would not be a unified category.

So, if categories have to be objective, if they have to exist as kinds in the world without anyone to interact with them or perceive them, then *chair*, as an objective kind of thing, does not exist. In this sense, there are no chairs.

What makes this interesting is that *we* naturally think that there are chairs, that the category *does* exist, which makes us notice the contribution that we make to the existence of things and to the very idea of existence.

IMAGINE FURNITURE

It is time for a thought experiment. Imagine a chair. Get a mental image of a chair. No problem. Now imagine a bed. No problem. Now a table. No problem once more.

All these are kinds of furniture. Now try something different. Try getting a mental image of a generalized piece of furniture—not a chair or a table or a bed or a lamp, but something that is general enough to be any of them.

I can't do it and I've never met anyone who can.

Now, think about how you normally interact with chairs. You have a motor program for sitting in a chair. Imagine using that motor program and sitting in a chair. No problem. You have a normal way of interacting with a bed, a motor program for lying in a bed. Imagine using that motor program and lying in a bed. No sweat.

Now try this with a generalized piece of furniture—not a chair or bed or table or lamp, not a specific kind of furniture but the general type. Do you have a motor program that you normally use to interact with furniture in general?

The answer is no.

Cognitive scientists have discovered that basic-level categories like chair, bed, and table are distinguished from superordinate categories like furniture by (among other things) our ability to form mental images and our motor programs for interacting with objects. In short, basic-level categories are defined not by the things in themselves but by how we perceive, imagine, and interact with those things.

Again we see that we are centrally involved in our categories. What we can imagine and how we move in the world matters to the categories we accept as existing.

Meaning is not purely objective. We, with our brains and bodies, make it. Meaning is not purely subjective. The world has to be there too. Meaning is interactional. It is based on how we interact with the world.

Is the chair blue? Not in itself. Without our bodies and brains, there are no chairs and there is no blueness.

YOU ARE THE MECHANISM OF MEANING

In the second panel (see p. 99, fig. 13.2) of the subdivision 13. *Logic of Meaning* in *The Mechanism of Meaning* by Arakawa and Gins,¹ there is a rectangle of lighter blue on a patch of darker blue, beneath which we find the words "WHOSE BLUE." The lighter blue rectangle carries the words "my blue"; the darker blue patch is inscribed "your blue."

There are languages that distinguish light blue from dark blue, that see the blues as different colors and use different words for them. Suppose I spoke English and you another language. Which blue would be blue for you? How would one translate "blue"? Is it arbitrary? Is it just a choice-of-language game?

No. All people have the same central blue, because of our color cones and our neural circuitry. The darker blue is closer to the universal, body-determined, central blue than the lighter blue. It is the more natural candidate to be translated as "blue." Perhaps we would translate the lighter blue "cerulean." Such questions need not be arbitrary. Our bodies answer. That is where the logic of meaning comes from.

Below the blues in the same panel are two rectangles. Each has four arrows of the same length. In the left rectangle, the four arrows are distributed over the four corners of the rectangle and all point to the middle. Underneath is a directive: "ESTABLISH A COMMON MEETING POINT FOR EACH SET OF ARROWS." No problem for the left rectangle. I mentally extend the arrows till they meet in the middle.

The arrows in the right rectangle take some thought. They are arranged in a stack on the right side. The top two are widely separated and point to the right. The bottom two are narrowly separated and point to the left. How to establish a common meeting point?

I think of the mathematical heroes of my youth—of Bernhard Riemann, of August Möbius, of Felix Klein. I stretch the rectangle in my mind and make mental cuts in the plane so that the arrows can bend in different directions in space. I twist the stretched pieces of rectangle so that they fit around a sphere with the arrows extending in different directions along

their cut-and-stretched pieces of the plane. On the opposite side of the sphere, the mental extensions of the arrows intersect on the cut, bent, and pasted plane.

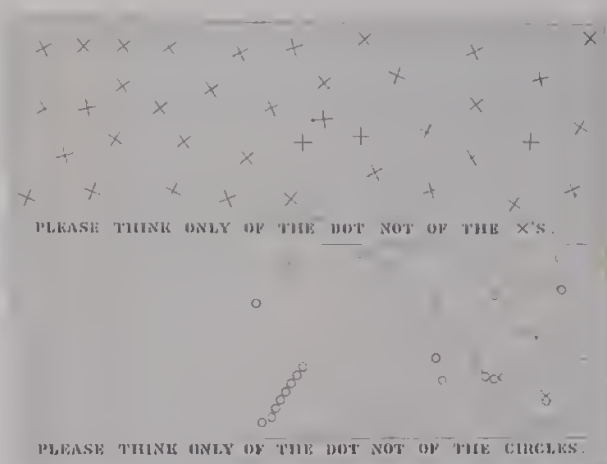
It might seem that the arrows in the rectangle on the left pointing to the middle meet “naturally” and that the arrows in the rectangle on the right do not. But *I* make both sets of arrows meet. There is nothing in either of the sets of arrows themselves that makes them meet.

This is possible because *I*, like you, embody the mechanism of meaning.

MAPPINGS

I turn back to the subdivision called *11. Mapping of Meaning*. Mapping is crucial to the creation of meaning. There are exercises. In the fourth panel (see p. 93, fig. 11.4), there are two columns labeled “A” and “B.” In each column there are four pictures. There are arrows back and forth between the first picture in each column, the second picture, and so on. Between the first set of arrows is written “IS A MAP OF.” The first two-way mapping occurs between (in column A) a picture of an earnest young man with short hair and (in column B) a picture of a young woman with a 1950s hairdo.

You are called upon to map each onto the other. There are many approaches. You might start with a stereotype of each: a man trying to get ahead in business; a young woman wanting to have a good time for awhile, then get married and have a home in the suburbs and a country-



The Mechanism of Meaning, 1. Neutralization of Subjectivity, panel 1 [detail]

club membership. How are they the same, or opposite? Is there a correspondence between one’s macho maleness and the other’s 1950s femininity? What exactly is the relationship?

The next mapping: A is a picture of a woman in a negligee, her breasts all but revealed; she is shown against a white background. B is the negative: a black background with the woman’s white silhouette cut out. How can you turn other things that you see into negative silhouettes? What is the mapping of the breasts onto the white silhouette?

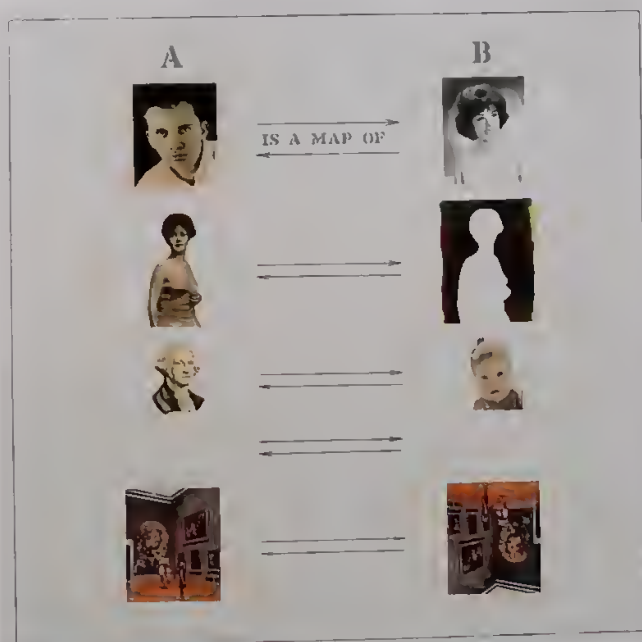
The exercise continues: map George Washington onto a baby, and conversely. Then map a museum scene onto the same scene upside down.

We perform mappings all the time, but not these. These exercises call upon us to create new mappings, to be a new mechanism of meaning.

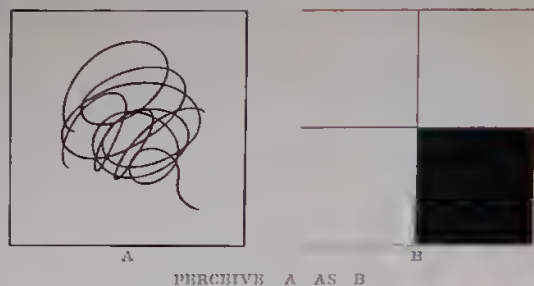
DON’T THINK OF AN ELEPHANT

In a beginning cognitive-science class, I say to my students, “Don’t think of an elephant.” The exercise has two points: to exemplify one’s power to create mental images instantly; and to experience an order that, if understood, must be violated.

On the first panel of the subdivision *1. Neutralization of Subjectivity* (see p. 55, fig. 1.1), a similar exercise can be carried out. There is a rectangular field containing a small unobtrusive dot in the center surrounded by many Xs. The multitude of Xs are more noticeable than the dot. Underneath is written “PLEASE THINK ONLY OF THE DOT NOT OF THE X’S.” This is a difficult meditation exercise. Even if you try focusing on the dot, the eye, with its normal unconscious, uncontrollable movements, will move around the area of the dot over lots of Xs, which you cannot help noticing. But if you meditate long enough, it may be possible to get the dot to be at the center of your consciousness.



The Mechanism of Meaning, 11. Mapping of Meaning, panel 4 [detail]



The Mechanism of Meaning, 8. Reassembling panel 2 (detail)

Immediately below the dot and Xs is a rectangular field with many lightly colored circles and no dot. Underneath is written, "PLEASE THINK ONLY OF THE DOT NOT OF THE CIRCLES." But there is no dot there; it can only have been imported from the rectangle above if you carried out the first meditation. Then, and only then, will the dot be there. The exercise trains the viewer to think differently, to see differently, and to notice that he or she can see differently.

THE SPACE-FILLING CURVE

Giuseppe Peano, one of the greatest of mathematicians, thought up a curve that would go through every point in a square.⁴ In the second panel of the subdivision 8. *Reassembling* (see p. 81, fig. 8.2), Arakawa and Gins have invented a corresponding exercise in which there are two squares, "A" and "B." A has a random, squiggly curve drawn inside it. B is divided into four subsquares, with the bottom right one dark. The instruction is "PERCEIVE A AS B." To do this you must perform mental operations. Move the curve in A to the lower right corner of A, then smear the curve so that its darkness covers all of that lower right corner. Then you are perceiving A as B. The exercise makes you notice the mental operations you normally perform, and it gives you practice in controlling them.

FURTHER ASSIGNMENTS

First, work through the exercises in *The Mechanism of Meaning* (see pp. 54-111). Then, construct a series of similar exercises with human beings. The object of your exercises should be to make the participant aware of each of the mental and physical mechanisms with which she or he is equipped for creating empathy with the "other" and for carrying out empathic action toward the other. One might, for example, experience the emotion of being whipped by the other's father. Of reacting with anger. Of holding one's anger. Of blaming oneself. Of blaming one's child in later life. Make up ninety-nine such exercises.

Exercise number 100:

- Construct a clearly empathic exercise to change someone's mode of conceptualization.
- Construct a clearly nonempathic exercise to change someone's mode of perception.

Exercise number 101:

Create an exercise to illustrate two interpretations of Buddhism.

Interpretation 1: Enlightenment is the achievement of detachment from our ordinary modes of thought—the achievement of emptiness.

Interpretation 2: Detachment is only stage one; true enlightenment further requires the achievement of empathy and nurturance, of compassion and compassionate action.

IS DESTINY REVERSIBLE?

The Mechanism of Meaning is enormously rich. A cognitive scientist could write volumes about the details of all the exercises and the mental apparatus required to carry them out. But *The Mechanism of Meaning* is just the beginning of the Arakawa and Gins project. It does not exist in a vacuum. It is a stepping stone to sites of reversible destiny.

In moving from *The Mechanism of Meaning* to "reversible destiny," Arakawa and Gins confront a common and not very pretty view of our current status: The concepts and ways of understanding the world that we have acquired in the course of human history are leading to disaster. In the name of "progress" and "development," we are wiping out the natural world and the possibility for most human beings to live meaningful, harmonious lives. We are destroying forests and rivers and wetlands forever; killing off species after species; killing off indigenous cultures and, with them, their languages; creating work that is progressively alienating; creating a permanent division between an educated overclass and an uneducated underclass; and so on.

Not a pretty thought. Is this our destiny? As long as we keep thinking the way we now think, there is no end in sight. Can we change how we think? Then and only then is destiny reversible.

What can artists contribute to changing how we think? If our concepts arise from the way our bodies interact in the world, can we change our concepts by changing how we interact? Can artists create an environment that will force us to notice our concepts and to create new, less harmful ones? Can artists disrupt our thought processes by disrupting our bodily experience and thereby make it possible for us to see things afresh, to reconceptualize our experience? That is one way artists might contribute to reversing our destiny.

NEW BRAINS FOR OLD

Our conceptual systems, our ways of understanding the world, are distributed over configurations of synaptic connections in our brains. Our concepts are physically part of our brains. To get radically new concepts



Ubiquitous Site • Nagi's Ryoanji • Architectural Body Nagi Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan, 1992-94

is to get new synaptic weights and connections. To learn to think in a significantly different way requires a rewiring of our brains. Short of surgery, how can we learn to think anew?

Our brains do have significant plasticity; exactly how much is not known. Even us old dogs can learn some new tricks. But how? The answer is through experience. Since many of our concepts are grounded in bodily experience, perhaps providing new bodily experience can accomplish an appropriate rewiring of the brain and allow us to see the world anew.

WALLS

Arakawa and Gins's *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, 1993-95, constructed on 18,000 square meters of land in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, has walls in

unusual places. There is a wall in the middle of: (a) a bathtub, (b) a bed, (c) a desk, (d) a stove, and (e) a toilet. Is it a bathtub if there is a wall through it? Does your mental image of a bathtub have a wall through it? Can you bathe in a bathtub with a wall through it? If not, why is it a bathtub at all? What makes the bathtub and wall separate objects? Maybe they aren't. Why do we see a wall and a bathtub as separate objects located with respect to each other so that the wall is down the middle of the bathtub? Why don't we see a single bathtub-wall object? Could we? Could we if we lived there long enough? What would it be like to image it as a single object? To use it as a single object? Could we make it a single basic-level object?

Ask these questions about (b) through (e). How do your existing categories determine what you see and how you imagine yourself functioning

(1) in the world at large and (2) in a site of reversible destiny? What would it be like to live at the site? What would be disrupted? What would you have to rethink? How would you have to move your body?

IMAGE-SCHEMAS

Objects are all over the place. There is an infinity of ways to position objects in space relative to one another. How do we cope with that infinity?

Cognitive linguists have discovered that people understand the relationships between things in space in terms of a small number of elementary schematic mental images, or "image-schemas." Imagine a cup on a table. The relation "on" has three parts: (1) The cup is in *contact* with the table. (2) It is *vertically oriented* with respect to the table. And (3) it is *supported* by the table. Not every language has a concept "On," but every language has the concepts "Contact," "Vertical Orientation," and "Support." Each of these is an elementary image-schema. Others include: "Container" (defining in and out), "Path" (defining to and from), "Part-Whole," "Center-Periphery," "Balance," and so on. We also have basic body-schemas (head, trunk, arms, legs, front, back) and basic face-schemas.⁵

Every complex mental image we have is made up of a collection of these elementary image-schemas. For example, in a mental image of a car, there will be an interior and an exterior of the car. In short, the car will be structured by a container schema, with the external surface of the car as the boundary. Moreover, the car will be schematized using a front-back schema; that's jargon for saying we conceptualize it as having a front and a back.

Every time we perceive a scene, we automatically and unconsciously structure it using these schemas. Our spatial reasoning derives from the structure that these image-schemas give to our mental images and our perceptions. The elementary schemas appear not to change or vary across time or cultures. Terry Regier's research, published in his book *The Human Semantic Potential*, suggests that our elementary image-schemas arise from inborn structures of our bodies and brains, plus very basic common experiences.⁶ It appears that such elementary image-schemas are going to be with us whether our destiny is reversed or not.

However, if our concepts are to be changed, our current complex images will have to be disassembled, image-schema by image-schema. Disassembling our images sounds both scary and not clearly possible. What do Arakawa and Gins have in mind?

Pages 31 through 60 (a "Notebook") in Arakawa and Gins's publication *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny* is a walk through the process of conversion from the ordinary to the reversible site.⁷ The artists start with an ordinary living room: two armchairs, two couches, a lamp, a coffee table, two cups of coffee, a spoon, walls, a floor, a door, two windows. Then they add the concept of a "landing site." Perceptually, landing sites are places where your glance rests. Physically, they are places where your body interacts with an object. Conceptually, they are mental configurations that shape your spatial understanding and thus allow your mind to rest in a configuration.

Arakawa and Gins see their job as forcing you to create new landing sites by systematically removing and reconfiguring your old ones. The body is redirected; the paths to the old landing sites are blocked. New perceptual landing sites are installed, new paths to physical landing



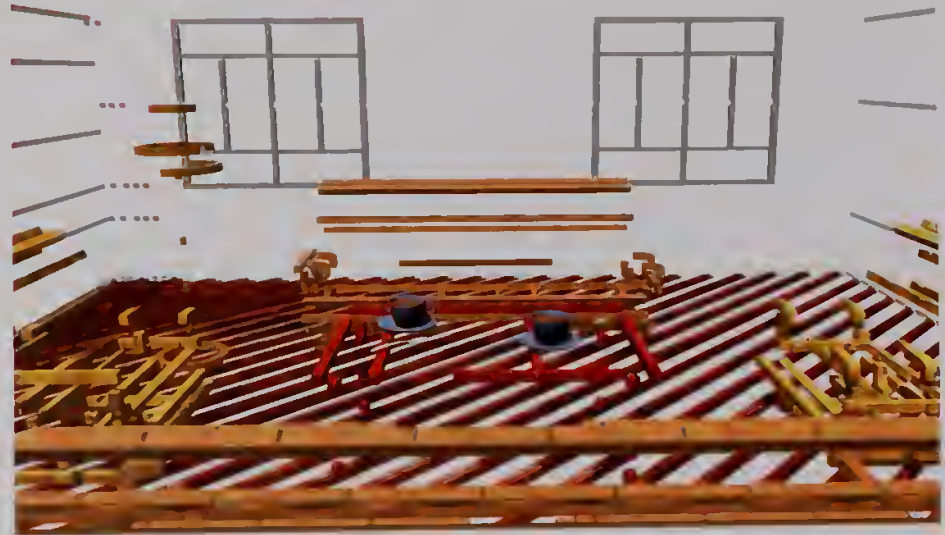
Interior views of *Critical Resemblances House, Site of Reversible Destiny*—Yoro
Gifu Prefecture, Japan 1993-95





Landing Sites Studies of an Ordinary Room 1993–94

With each glance, a limited number of perceptual landing sites deliver salient features of the view, and imaging landing sites fill in the gaps. An ordinary living room is shown with and without imaging landing sites in place to fill in the gaps.



sites inserted. Straight paths are made curved, level paths are made to undulate. Contradictions—physical contradictions—are introduced. There is no longer a way to make unambiguous sense of the room. Thus, the body is affected. You can no longer just walk through the room with your old body posture. The body must change. “Nothing is more desirable than that the body be thrown off balance drastically,” Arakawa and Gins declare.⁸ Size is changed. The cup and spoon are made huge. You can climb into the cup, but not drink from it. The artists have done their job:

The Reversible Destiny House I is a means of unraveling a person to the fullest possible extent. . . . [In *Reversible Destiny House II*] the orders the

body receives for how to move so as to make its way past the walls on the lower level will be directly contradicted by the orders for movement that the wall placement in the upper patterned segments implies. . . . Identical sets of furniture stand similarly positioned one above the other within the upper and the lower altered labyrinths, with the furniture of the upper region hanging upside down from the ceiling.⁹

ART AS DISRUPTION

Here, as I understand it, is the logic of Arakawa and Gins: The increasing violence and destruction in the world—physical, ecological, economic, social, and emotional—are all a product of our present modes of thought.

If the cruelty is to end, our concepts must change. Since concepts are physically encoded in the brain and grounded in the body, our brains and bodies must change. If art is to play a role for the good, it must disrupt our concepts, our normal ways of functioning—our brains and our bodies. Art as disruption is art as a moral force. Disruption is an aesthetic experience, and an aesthetic experience of this kind is inherently moral. Moreover, disruptive art on a large-enough scale will be sufficient to reverse our destiny, so that the violence and destruction can end.

PHYSICAL KOANS

The work of Arakawa and Gins reminds me of Zen koans. It is as if the koans were put in the form of conceptual art in *The Mechanism of Meaning* and in the form of architecture in the *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*. Zen koans are meant to disrupt the seeker's conventional mode of thought, to detach the seeker from it, and to enable the seeker to perceive and comprehend without the mediation of conventional categories.

I love the koanlike quality of *The Mechanism of Meaning*. I love the way it challenges our normal modes of thought and perception and leads to new ones, or leads nowhere and leaves us with a puzzle.

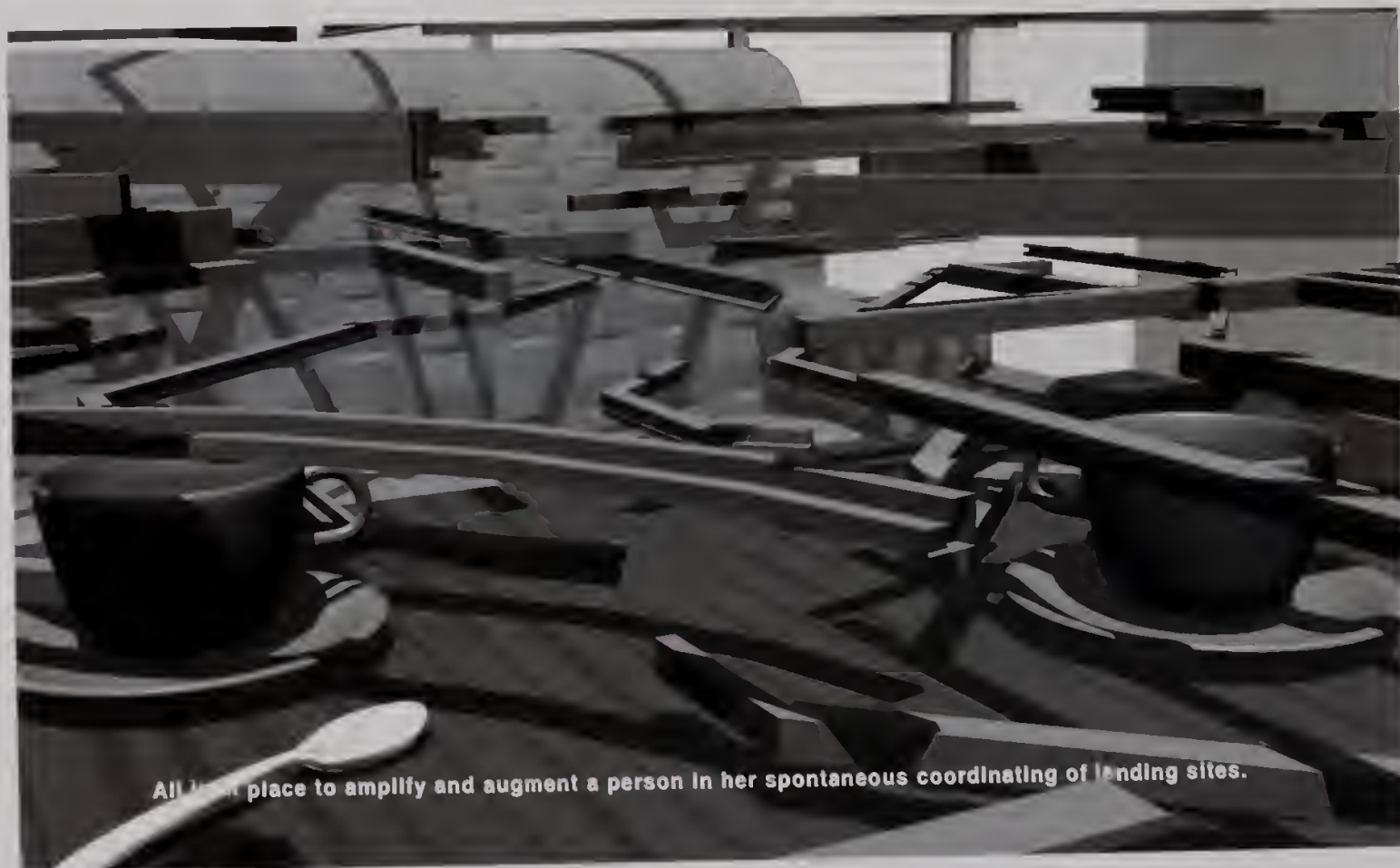
I like the physical form the architectural koans take in the sites of reversible destiny—the denial of old forms of physical experience and the creation of new ones.

I believe with Arakawa and Gins that their disruption of our everyday consciousness and the physical experience that grounds it can serve a moral purpose.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THAT FERRET?

Shortly after I read about the ferret whose eyes were connected to its auditory cortex I asked, through the neuroscience grapevine, what happened to that ferret. Did it learn to see with its auditory cortex or hear visual input?

The answer is that it heard visual input.



All this place to amplify and augment a person in her spontaneous coordinating of landing sites.

Landing Sites Study of an Ordinary Room. 1993-94

Did flowers and the sunrise sound beautiful? Were its ears hooked up to its visual cortex? Did it learn to see what we hear? Did the voices of ferrets of the opposite sex look good?

Sadly, the ferret did not survive—and could not have survived. It lived just long enough to hear a tiny part of the visual world, just long enough for its auditory cortex to develop a bit of neural structure of the kind found in the visual cortex.

Brains are structured in an extremely complex and subtle way, and massive rewiring is not really viable.

ARE THERE LIMITS TO PLASTICITY? I EXPRESS SOME DOUBTS

Is the bad news for the ferret also bad news for reversible destiny? Are there limits to how we can learn to think anew? There is a case to be made for such limits. Here is a short version of that case:

First, the major part of our system of concepts is universal and arises spontaneously around the world. Biology and physics are largely responsible. We all have basically the same kinds of bodies and brains. We all live in a gravitational field, manipulate objects, eat and excrete, perceive, interact with other people, move about in our environment, stand erect and balanced, and so on. Sites of reversible destiny cannot change this, and should not. And yet, these most basic of experiences shape much of what is universal about our conceptual systems—our basic conceptions of time, events, causation, purpose, even morality.¹⁰

Many of these concepts are metaphorical, as when we conceptualize time as flowing by, or see purposes as destinations we are trying to reach, or when we balance the moral books. Such forms of metaphorical thought are not arbitrary nor are they changeable. They arise and are sustained by the most basic and unchangeable of experiences, like the correlation between motion and time, or by the fact that to achieve everyday purposes we have to go to certain locations—to get a drink of water, you have to go to the water fountain, the stream, the tap, or the well.

Our most basic concepts are also sustained in other ways. They are sustained in memory. We use our concepts to pick out what to remember and we remember at least in large part in terms of our basic concepts. Memory creates conceptual stability. Then there is language. Our language is based on our conceptual systems. Every time we think, talk, or read in our language, we are reinforcing our basic conceptual systems. This is not just a matter of the words we use. Even the grammatical constructions of our language have meanings that make use of those concepts.

Finally, the way that our concepts are instantiated in our brains makes them unlikely to be disrupted and discarded. A concept is not stored in one place or in one neuron. A concept is distributed over whole populations of neurons. Even if many neurons die or are disrupted, enough of the activation pattern that characterizes a concept is likely to remain.

In short, our most basic concepts are not all that plastic.

Moreover, it is the basic concepts that have gotten human beings into their present fix. The ideas of purpose, of gain and loss, and of progress toward a goal are fundamental and not likely to be disrupted away. Each

child by the age of three spontaneously learns a simple version of the moral order: people above higher animals above lower animals above plants above inanimate objects. Children learn this hierarchy by noticing similarities and differences between themselves and other things in the world. The moral order, in which people are above the rest of nature, is in fundamental conflict with deep ecology. Sites of reversible destiny, so far as I can tell, cannot change much, if any, of this.

STRONG REVERSIBLE DESTINY

So far, I have not given the idea of reversible destiny its full due. I have only described the weak version, the version that seeks to eliminate the murdering of species and of the nonhuman natural world, that seeks to eliminate cruelty and war and economic slavery and emotional despair. The strong version seeks much more: the elimination of death itself.

The artists do not merely mean the prolongation of life, a prolongation to come from constant renewal of the mind and body through new kinds of functioning. A look at yoga and tai chi masters tells us that life can, in special cases, be prolonged for a while.

The artists do not merely mean the elimination of metaphorical death, the death of not thinking new kinds of thoughts. They believe that the present reversible destiny constructions might eliminate that kind of death, but that is not enough.

Arakawa and Gins really do mean *the elimination of death itself*! They take death as an affront, an insult to the human spirit, to artistic innovation. I don't believe they really think that an existing site (such as *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*) can in itself accomplish the elimination of death. Rather, they would probably say, one has to start somewhere and at least ask the question.

But should one?

WOULD THE ELIMINATION OF DEATH BE A GOOD THING?

I find myself, against my will, in a Woody Allen movie. I am the lunkheaded, timid, whiny shortsighted professor usually played by Wallace Shawn, but this time played by me, since Wally is unavailable, and I look more like myself anyway.

I run into Woody at the Guggenheim, at the Arakawa and Gins exhibition. He recognizes me from the picture in my book. We debate about whether the elimination of death would be a good thing. I think it would be a disaster.

WOODY: How could the elimination of death itself be disaster? Think if Mozart were still alive! Or Einstein! Or Mr. Weinstein who made the great egg creams!

GEORGE: Or Hitler. Or Stalin. Or Roy Cohn.

WOODY: But think of eternal life! You could watch *Night and Fog* into eternity.

GEORGE: With Alzheimer's? With cancer? You couldn't kill the cells.

With no teeth? You couldn't kill the germs in your mouth. Think of

how everyone would smell. With my great-aunt Lena? Could you put up with her forever? Dr. Kevorkian has a point.

A few more turns and the scene ends. Woody walks off with a beautiful young girl intent on discussing film theory. They pass a group of old men who look remarkably like Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Roy Cohn.

1 "Ferrets Looking Loudly, Hear the Light," *Science News*, December 10, 1988, p. 374.

2 For a survey of the tenets of objective philosophy, see George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

3 In writing this essay, I consulted Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, new 3rd ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988).

4 See Edna E. Kramer, *The Nature and Growth of Modern Mathematics* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1970), pp. 528–29, and Eli Maor, *To Infinity and Beyond: A Cultural History of the Infinite* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 76–79.

5 See Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*.

6 Terry Regier, *The Human Semantic Potential* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

7 Arakawa and Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny* (London: Academy Editions, 1994), pp. 31–60.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 99.

10 See Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*; Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in A. Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Lakoff, *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Regier, *The Human Semantic Potential*.

Elliptical Field, Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro,
Gifu Prefecture, Japan, 1993–95





Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question 1973-89

Plastic, wire mesh, and wood, 42 feet x 13 feet 10 inches x 5 feet 10 1/4 inches overall

Included in *Building Sensoriums*, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York September-October 1990

The floor plan runs alongside the model in exact correlation, so that the region of the bridge before which the viewer stands corresponds with the area on the plan upon which the viewer stands. The viewer's engagement with the work is altered by standing on the floor plan and gripping the rope that extends along the right-hand side.

Saving Not

MARK C. TAYLOR

Unfailingly the blank returns. –Stéphane Mallarmé

o o o

The object of perception was strange—distressingly strange. This was no ordinary work of art. Neither painting, nor sculpture, nor architecture, but something else . . . something other. At first glance, the object seemed more scientific than artistic. It appeared to be something like a high-tech particle accelerator, a design for a future nuclear reactor, or even a model for an extraterrestrial colony. But as I examined the object more carefully, it slowly became apparent that it was a plan for a bridge—a bridge unlike any other that has ever been built: *Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question*, 1973–89. Long, low, and sleek, the black monochromatic model was comprised of geometric shapes: spheres, cubes, cylinders, pyramids, circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles. The *Bridge* was simple, yet complex; rooms inside rooms, rooms above rooms, rooms below rooms combined to create a bridge of bridges. Neither one nor many, the *Bridge* was undeniably duplicitous. The rooms that emptied the space of the *Bridge* bore perplexing names:

Bodily Conjecture at Light
In the Recesses of the Communal Stare
The New Missing Link
Diffuse Receding Gauge
Companion to Indeterminacy
Volume Bypass
Points of Departure Membranes
The Where of Nowhere
Edges of Apprehending
Inflected Geometry
Accrual Matrix
The Planet's Cry
Than Which No Other
To Not to Die/The Helen Keller Room
Reverse-Symmetry Transverse-Envelope Hall
Gaze Brace

Assembly of Latent Perceivers
Cradle of Reassembly
Forming Inextinguishability

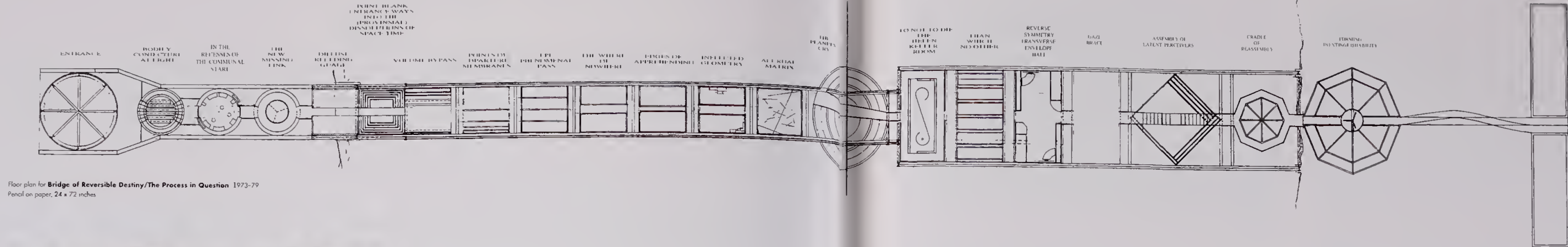
Within and between the rooms, there were layers upon layers of black mesh that simultaneously transformed once solid walls into sites of passage and impeded movement. In some rooms, there was no room—only an endless tissue of mesh; in other rooms, there was nothing but room—only the uncanny darkness of seemingly empty space. All of this was suspended, or was supposed to be suspended, above a river, the Moselle River in Epinal, France. A suspension bridge, a bridge of suspense, a bridge that suspends.

How?
Where?
Why?

o o o

The space of the bridge is a nonspace; its site is a nonsite. The bridge is suspended along a border, margin, boundary, in an interval, gap, cleavage. The place of the bridge is the nonplace of the between where here and now are suspended. This between, which is forever oscillating, brings together what it holds apart and holds apart what it brings together. “The bridge,” Martin Heidegger avers, “swings over the stream ‘with ease and power’”:

It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other. . . . The bridge *gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream. . . . Even where the bridge covers the stream, it holds its flow up to the sky by taking it for a moment under the vaulted gateway and then setting it free once more. . . . The bridge lets the stream run its course and at the same time grants their way to mortals so that they may come and go from shore to shore. . . . Bridges lead in many ways. . . . Always and ever



Floor plan for *Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question* 1973-79
Pencil on paper, 24 x 72 inches



Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question (detail)
Pedestrians will have to step around the stone sphere to enter the bridge

differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may get to other banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side. . . . The bridge *gathers*, as a passage that crosses, before the divinities—whether we explicitly think of, and visibly *give thanks for*, their presence, as in the figure of the saint of the bridge, or whether that divine presence is obstructed or even pushed wholly aside. The bridge *gathers* to itself in *its own* way earth and sky, divinities and mortals.¹

“Bridges lead [and mislead] in many ways.” But how many ways? And where do these ways lead?

o o o

Arakawa is one of the most intensely philosophical—perhaps even theological—artists now working. From the outset, his concerns are not only aesthetic. Since, unlike so many artists, Arakawa realizes that aesthetics and metaphysics are inseparable, his artistic investigations presuppose philosophical interrogations. The intricate interplay of art and philosophy is graphically displayed in his innovative work *The Mechanism of Meaning*, 1963–73, 1996 (see pp. 54–111). *The Mechanism of Meaning* is something like a philosophico-aesthetic workbook that formulates questions, poses paradoxes, and explores conundrums. Though elegant in their own way, the panels included in this work are not guided by primarily aesthetic concerns. Nor are they simply conceptual. Rather, Arakawa probes the space where concept and figure, as well as word and image, intersect. While Arakawa’s art is undeniably modern in its ambitions and purposes, he consistently rejects the modernist doctrine of the autonomy of the work of art. His painterly surfaces are interrupted by objects, found images, and, most important, words—some written, some stenciled, others reproduced in collage. Conversely, the written text is interrupted by objects, found images, and, most important, painterly surfaces that are often blank. Text supplements painting and painting supplements text in a play of supplements that subverts the classical opposition between concept and figure, word and image, and philosophy and art.

The textual supplements at work in Arakawa’s works extend beyond the frame of the canvas. Works frame texts that reframe works. In this intricate tissue of supplements that creates art, Arakawa never works alone; his art is essentially collaborative. The texts that inform his work are written in cooperation with Madeline Gins. The origin of the work of

art is not one but (at least) two—two who often seem to be one or almost one. But the textual weave that Arakawa and Gins fashion is even more complex than this duplicity suggests. Their work is intrinsically incomplete and inherently open-ended. It is filled (or not filled) with holes, fissures, faults, and gaps. These gaps open the space-time that draws the viewer-reader into the work of art. Arakawa and Gins’s work *cannot* be passively received; it *must* be actively apprehended. This apprehension is a reproduction that is not simply a repetition of the same but is the articulation of something different. To grasp the work of art is to collaborate in the labor of production. The art of Arakawa and Gins issues an invitation: “Come! Join us in the work of art.” Those who accept this solicitation gradually realize that to enter the *Bridge of Reversible Destiny* is to begin a journey that is irreversible. For Arakawa and Gins and their collaborators, the work of art is not an autonomous aesthetic object but is, in the final analysis, the perceiving subject. The work of art, in other words, is nothing less than oneself. Within this framework, the only art worthy of the name is an art that saves—saves not only itself but also saves the subject by allowing the self to lose itself. Saving art struggles to save art by refiguring the art of saving in a world deserted by the gods.

While the art of Arakawa and Gins is, as I have suggested, undeniably modern, their work does not simply repeat well-established modern doctrines and techniques. To the contrary, they develop a critical art that responds to certain failures of modernism. Modernism is irrepressibly utopian. Though ideas and images of the promised land vary, much twentieth-century art takes over the redemptive role once played by religion. From this perspective, art provides what Schiller describes as an “aesthetic education,” which prepares the way for the realization of the ideal society.² The dreams of modernity, however, turn into terrifying nightmares. From the ovens of Auschwitz, to the scorched earth of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, utopian hopes are turned to ash. Art after Hiroshima bears the trace of a wound whose depth cannot be fathomed.

How can art continue in the shadow of such a disaster? Though our world is admittedly “postutopian,” Arakawa and Gins insist not only that art must continue but that art still has the power to save. *If* hope remains, it is hope nurtured by the work of art. In the midst of death and destruction, art teaches how “To Not to Die.”

Clement Greenberg argues that Kant is “the first real modernist. The essence of modernism,” according to Greenberg, “lies in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself—not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence. Kant used logic to establish the limits of logic, and while he withdrew much from its old jurisdiction, logic was left in all the more secure possession of what remained to it.”³ To be modern, then, is not only to be critical but to be self-critical. Self-criticism presupposes the structure of reflexivity in which the knowing subject takes itself as its own object. Kant’s so-called “Copernican Revolution” extends the turn to the subject with which Descartes initiates modern philosophy. Modern philosophy is, first and foremost, a philosophy of the subject. The modern subject, in turn, is a constructive subject who creates the world in his or her own image. Though not immediately evident, Kantian critical philosophy actually reinscribes classical ontology in modern epistemology. Since the time of Plato, the process of creation has been interpreted as involving a synthesis of form and matter. In Plato’s myth of origins, the world is created through the activity of a Demiurge, who brings together the transcendent eternal forms and the chaotic flux of matter. Kant translates the form/matter distinction into epistemological structures. While the Platonic forms become forms of intuition and categories of understanding, matter reappears as the sensible manifold of intuition. The stuff of sensation is, in William James’s apt phrase, a “bloomin’, buzzin’ confusion,” until it is ordered and organized by the structures of intuition and understanding. In a manner analogous to the Platonic Demiurge, the

knowing subject creates the world by uniting form and matter. Though the process of world-making is subjective, it is not, according to Kant, idiosyncratic. Like Plato's archetypes, Kant's human forms of intuition and categories of understanding are universal and immutable.

Consequently, constructive subjects create a shared world in which common structures unite otherwise separate individuals. There is, however, a significant price to be paid for this unity. Since they are universal and unchangeable, the forms of intuition and categories of understanding constitute an irreversible destiny for the knowing subject. Epistemic structures, in other words, are unavoidable.

The task that Arakawa and Gins undertake in their art is to reverse the seemingly irreversible destiny of the modern subject. Toward this end, they develop something like what Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes as a "phenomenology of perception."⁴ The importance of Arakawa and Gins's artwork emerges clearly when their interrogation of the art of perception is contrasted with Merleau-Ponty's philosophical phenomenology of perception.

Merleau-Ponty formulates his phenomenology of perception in response to the philosophy of reflection, which receives its most complete articulation in Hegel's phenomenology of spirit. Hegel's speculative interpretation of the reflexivity of subjectivity brings to completion the analysis of the structure of self-consciousness begun by Kant. Merleau-Ponty argues that:

the philosophy of reflection metamorphoses the effective world into a transcendental field; in doing so it only puts me back at the origin of a spectacle that I could never have had unless, unbeknown to myself, I organized it. It only makes me consciously what I have always been distractedly; it only makes me give its name to a dimension behind myself, a depth whence, in fact, already my vision was formed. Through reflection, the "I," lost in its perceptions, rediscovers itself by rediscovering them [i.e., perceptions] as thoughts. [The "I"] thought it had quit itself for them, deployed itself in them; it comes to realize that if it had quit itself, they would not be and that the very deployment of the distances and the things was only the "outside" of its own inward intimacy with itself, that the unfolding of the world was the enfolding on itself of a thought that thinks anything whatever only because it thinks itself first.⁵

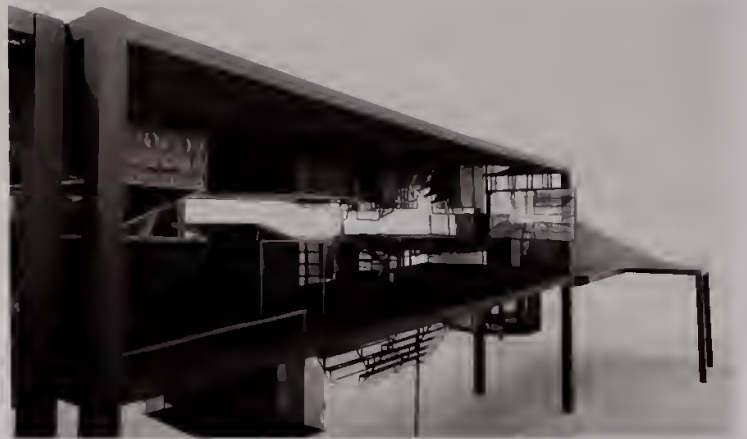
If the subject thinks only by first thinking itself, then all knowledge is actually self-knowledge. When the knower becomes fully aware of what and how he or she knows, consciousness is transformed into self-consciousness. Transparent self-consciousness dispels the obscurity of consciousness by effecting a perfect reconciliation of subjectivity and objectivity. In the philosophy of reflection, ambiguity is a penultimate moment that inevitably gives way to the clarity of certain knowledge. Merleau-Ponty argues that "a logically consistent transcendental idealism strips the world of its opacity and its transcendence. The world is the

same, which we represent to ourselves not as empirical subjects, but insofar as we are all one light and participate in the One without dividing it."⁶ The pure light of this transparent moment is supposed to reveal absolute knowledge.

From Merleau-Ponty's point of view, the embodied subject can never attain absolute knowledge. Consciousness and self-consciousness harbor a blindness that *cannot* be overcome. Reflection, he contends, "recuperates everything except itself as an effort of recuperation, it clarifies everything except its own role. The mind's eye too has its blind spot, but, because it is of the mind, one cannot be unaware of it, nor treat it as a simple state of nonvision, which requires no particular mention, the very act of reflection that is *quoad nos* [up until our time] its act of birth."⁷ To glimpse the mind's blind spot, one must deconstruct the modern subject.

The modern subject, I have stressed, is a constructive subject that creates the world in its own image. Over against Kant and his followers, who argue that the subject is active even in perception, Merleau-Ponty maintains that the mind is primordially passive. At the rudimentary level of perception, the subject does not constitute the world. To the contrary, the world is "preconstituted" independently of the activity of the knowing subject. The most basic order or structure of the world, in other words, is not created by the constructive subject. "Thought cannot ignore its apparent history, if it is not to install itself beneath the whole of our experience, in a pre-empirical order where it would no longer merit its name; it must put to itself the problem of the genesis of its own meaning. It is in terms of its intrinsic meaning and structure that the sensible world is 'older' than the universe of thought."⁸ The *intrinsic* order of the world is apprehended by means of perception. Rather than chaotic flux, perception discloses an inherent order that is inaccessible to cognition. "If I pretend to find, through reflection, in the universal mind the premise that had always backed up my experience, I can do so only by forgetting this non-knowing of the beginning, which is not nothing, and which is not the reflective truth either, and for which I must also account."⁹ The purpose of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception is to recollect the non-knowing of reflection. Such remembering does not transform nonknowledge into knowledge but exposes the inevitable failure of reflection and, thus, the unavoidable partiality of knowledge.

Arakawa and Gins's phenomenology of perception falls *between* Hegel's phenomenology of spirit and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception. In keeping with the tenets of post-Kantian idealism, Arakawa and Gins insist that the subject is active at *every* level of awareness. Furthermore, it is possible to understand the way in which the mind operates in perception and conception. Nonetheless, Arakawa and Gins agree with Merleau-Ponty's recognition of the limits of reflection. Though the mind can grasp how it grasps the world, not everything is comprehensible for the sentient subject. Perception is riddled with gaps that interrupt the mechanism of meaning. In contrast to Merleau-Ponty's analysis of the faults of reflection, Arakawa and Gins maintain that the insurmountable cleavage of perception does not reveal an alternative



Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question

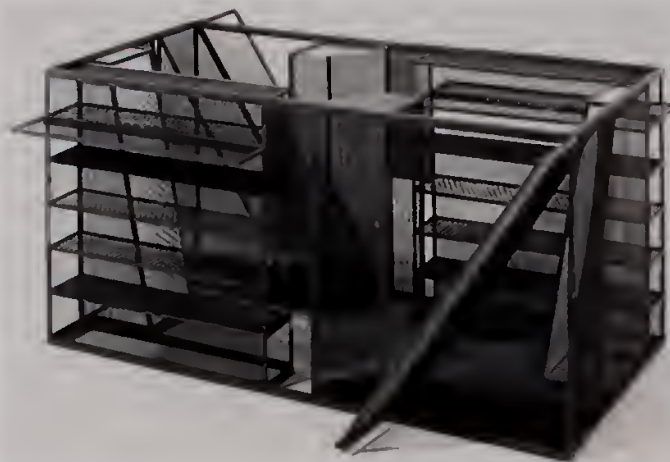
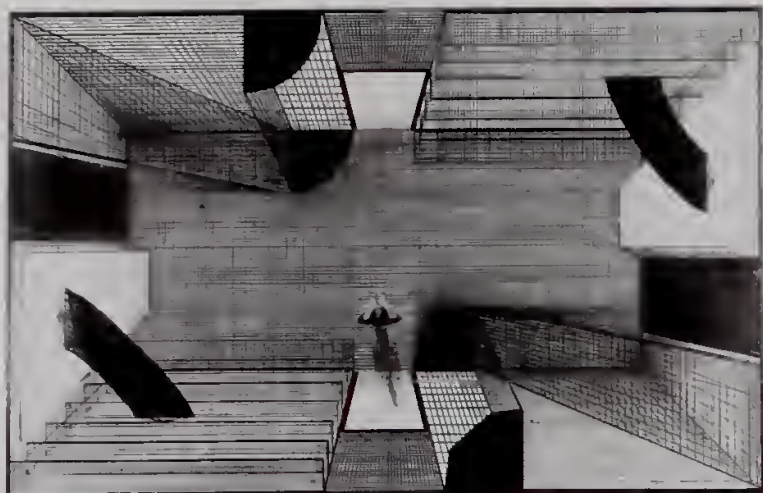
clockwise from top left

The bridge as seen from the exit end

The last half of the bridge, extending from To Not to Die/The Helen Keller Room to Forming Inextinguishability

Gaze Brace is located in the lower left corner and a scrambled version hangs directly above it from the roof. A panel depicting Gaze Brace juts out from the bridge

Looking back from Inflected Geometry to the three towers—Bodily Conjecture of Light, In the Recesses of the Communal Store, and The New Missing Link—with which the bridge starts



clockwise from top left
Overhead view of **Reverse-Symmetry Transverse-Envelope Hall**, 1976
Pencil on paper, 24 x 36 inches

Model for **Reverse-Symmetry Transverse-Envelope Hall**, 1974
Mesh, plastic, and wood, 12 x 24 x 12 inches

Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question (detail)
Gaze Brace, which appears in the lower half of this photograph, is a
three-dimensional construction of the overhead view of Reverse-Symmetry
Transverse-Envelope Hall

Reverse-Symmetry Transverse-Envelope Hall is an early example of Arakawa and Gins's architectural surrounds. Features at one end of a given wall match those at the opposite end of the facing wall. Pairs of opposing walls, having slight but significant differences, provide a basis for close comparisons of perceptual dispersals. Architectural surrounds are set up to analyze or augment the capabilities of those who move within them.

order but implies a nameless blank that repeatedly eludes the apprehensive subject.

The seemingly simple question with which Arakawa and Gins begin their investigation of the mechanism of meaning is: “How is here achieved?” or “How is here?”¹⁰ Meaning does not float freely but is rooted in experience, which, in turn, presupposes perception. Consequently, to understand how meaning emerges or fails to emerge, it is necessary to analyze the operation of perception. Over against Merleau-Ponty, Arakawa and Gins contend that perception is not fundamentally passive but is a complex activity comprised of multiple “microevents.” Instead of being passively received, the images that constitute the fields of perception and cognition are fabricated through activities that border on the poetic (*poiesis*, to make).

Forming space,
the perceiving,
brings about the perceived image
of fiction of place as detail;
by repeatedly cleaving,
it initiates the game of distance,
making it possible, for example, for
one’s arm, hand or foot to be seen.”¹¹

Since space is not preformed, it must be organized by the perceiving subject. Through constructive activity, the subject creates a “fiction of place” in which objects assume determinate form. By describing the site where objects appear as “fictive,” Arakawa and Gins stress the artificial character of space. Objects are artifacts created by imaginative subjects. When interpreted in this way, the activity of perception approximates the work of art.

In an effort to disclose the activity that generates meaning, Arakawa and Gins devise a series of visual puzzles, which they collect in *The Mechanism of Meaning*. By challenging the viewer-reader to perform impossible mental operations, the artists attempt to create an opportunity to observe perception in action. For example, in one of the works included in the subdivision 13. *Logic of Meaning*, they present four photographs of the same woman with different facial expressions (see p. 99, fig. 13.3). Beneath these images stenciled instructions appear: “USE ANY COMBINATION OF THE SETS BELOW TO DEMONSTRATE THE LOGICAL CONNECTIONS OF THE ONE ABOVE.” The alternatives for decoding the logic of meaning include silhouettes of a pencil, fish, apple, and tangled line or string; four empty squares; the first four letters of the alphabet in “improper order” (C, A, B, D); a tube punctuated with four small holes; and four white socks folded to form different shapes. It is impossible to define the rationale of the photographs with any or all of these images and objects. This is not to imply that the exercise proposed by this work of art is meaningless or senseless. To the contrary, 13. *Logic of Meaning* poses many important questions that involve the relation between artistic

production and reproduction, language and art, word and image, image and object, word and object, abstract form and concrete image/object. The impossibility of translating painted images into reproduced images, words, forms, and objects (and vice versa) suggests that there might be different logics at work in various domains of perception as well as reflection. These contrasting logics engender multiple meanings that cannot be reduced to each other. When gaps in meaning are acknowledged, it becomes possible to recognize what is all too easily overlooked—the white ground or blank space on which figures appear. The question of the blank will return.

The artistic object, Arakawa and Gins insist, is neither autonomous nor intrinsically significant. The artwork points beyond itself by turning the perceiving subject back on itself in order to apprehend its own apprehending. In this way, *The Mechanism of Meaning* functions in a manner similar to the interpretation of the experience of consciousness that Hegel plots in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. To follow either Arakawa and Gins or Hegel is to submit to an aesthetic education in which the entire world is transformed into a work of art.

In spite of notable similarities, there are equally important differences between the pedagogies of Arakawa-Gins and Hegel. The most consequential difference concerns the status of the creative subject. Arakawa and Gins begin a series of aphorisms entitled “The Tentative Constructed Plan as Intervening Device (for a Reversible Destiny)” by declaring, “Consider ‘I’ an architectural assertion and work out the details of how so. The task of coordinating the parts falls to the critical artist, the coordinator of events, the conductor of assertions.”¹² As we have seen, the aim of Kant’s critical philosophy is, in effect, to define the architecture of subjectivity. The *arche* of the subject is a universal and immutable structure that forms the foundation of intuition and understanding. While accepting the notion of transcendental subjectivity, Hegel introduces significant changes into the Kantian architectonic. Hegel accepts Kant’s insistence on the constitutive activity of the knowing subject but rejects the universality and immutability of the forms of intuition and categories of understanding. The structures through which particular subjects organize experience develop historically and, therefore, vary from time to time and place to place. Hegel attempts to avoid historical and cultural relativism by arguing that a universal or absolute subject is present in the activities of every individual subject. However, inasmuch as the universal never exists apart from the individual (and vice versa), Hegel’s struggle to escape the trap of relativism seems bound to fail. What appear to be the universal structures through which the world or, more precisely, worlds are created are actually historically determined generalities with which individuals and communities process their experience. Neither particular subjects nor specific groups are free to transform the structures that pattern their lives. History is destiny and destiny is irreversible.

Arakawa and Gins radicalize Hegel’s revision of Kant’s architecture of the “I” by attempting to reverse the destiny of the perceiving subject. The *Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question* extends and expands the



Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question (detail)

So that the river may in its turn cross the bridge, river water is pumped up through the trough, which spans the bridge at the region known as The Planet's Cry

interrogation begun in *The Mechanism of Meaning*. The process in question is perception, which forms the point of departure for every mechanism of meaning. In undertaking an analysis of the microevents that contribute to the activity of perception, Arakawa and Gins's interest is not merely descriptive. They seek to understand how perception works in order to reform perception itself. To effect this reformation, Arakawa and Gins interrupt the process of perception by means of an art that becomes architecture.

We call for an intervening role for architecture within the perceiving process. We believe that by means of architecture, or by means of something slightly but significantly different from what has up until now been called architecture, perception might be re-routed, and new sites for the originating of perception might be either found or formed, or both. How to make what is usually only observed into an observer (?). Any extending in this way of the active domain of sensibility would mark the beginning of the era of reversible destiny.¹⁴

The structures through which we create worlds *are not* our eternal destiny. Though we are thrown into existence in such a way that conformity to a previously constituted symbolic order is unavoidable, the codes that condition perception and cognition are open to deliberate transformation.

Each time, to the degree that a perceiver, with the help of a tentative constructed plan, succeeds in releasing herself from the limits of her conditioning, the number of possible alternatives suggesting themselves increases and the scope of the ubiquity in question widens. . . . Ubiquitous Site comprises not only all ongoing engagings,

realized and realizable landing sites, but also all approaches to these, all procedural queries and hints of query surrounding these events. Once again, this amounts to everywhere the senses range or could range.¹⁴

A landing site is a locus of perception. Like the fiction of place in which objects appear, the landing site, where perception settles, is a fabrication. Consequently, the subject as well as the object is something like a work of art. Indeed, the object of Arakawa and Gins's art is the *perceiving subject*. The art object as it is usually understood—that is, painting, sculpture, or architecture—is nothing more than a means to the end of the artwork *sensu strictissimo*, which is the creative subject. I am—the I is—a work of art. In the preface to the third, revised edition of *The Mechanism of Meaning*, Arakawa and Gins explain:

In the first part of this work, we take fragments, and we try, by making linkages to perceiving tactics immediate, slowly to draw these tactics, these ways of construing a demonstrably conceivable whole that *are* the perceiver-reader, into a unified field that we refer to as "the perceiving field." We propose, in the second section, to re-create and rejoin fragments, and would-be fragments, so as possibly to make a new whole, a completely other perceiver.¹⁵

The limits of perception are not absolute but are a function of an historically determined code that can be changed. To reform perception is to transform the architecture of the I. Since the world is not merely given but is constructed by the activity of the subject, the recoding of the I is the recreation of the world.

"Perceiving," Arakawa and Gins conclude, "may be said to require at nearly every juncture a making use by the perceiver of a tentative but rather well-defined plan. If these plans for perceiving could be made at last to be recognizably present, perhaps the species could finally begin to get somewhere."¹⁶ *Bridge of Reversible Destiny* is an architectural plan for reforming the architecture of the subject. As the margin of the between, a bridge is the site of passage. In this case, the shores brought together and held apart by the bridge are the self itself. Though reversing destiny, the *Bridge* does not inscribe a circle; the points of departure and arrival are both the same and different. The subject who enters the *Bridge* dies and, somewhere in between, an other subject is born. The *Bridge* marks the boundary where a transformative rite of passage takes place. As Arthur Danto points out:

the terminal component of the Bridge has the shape of an octagonal tank, at least from the outside; sloping away from it, like the wall of a pyramid, is a structure bisected by a passage. One exits from the octagon and enters the passage, whose walls diminish as one advances until, free at last in all senses, one is on the other side. Metaphorically, one is walking between the legs of a geometrical sphinx, so perhaps

the octagon is construed as a womb and exiting as a kind of rebirth. If this is true, then the sphere could be an abstract head, as the final space is the division between abstract legs, and the whole bridge is then a kind of relative of [Marcel] Duchamp's nude [in *Etant donnés*, 1946–66], with its component parts perhaps analogous to the perceptual parts—or sensorium—of the reclining body. So it could be a very powerful enactment to traverse the apparatus.¹⁷

Neither birth nor rebirth is an easy process. The passageway that leads to the reformation of the subject of perception is actually an obstacle course. Instead of cultivating aesthetic distance, *Bridge of Reversible Destiny* invites one to enter the work of art. By inserting oneself *inside* the work, the subject actually becomes a part of *l'oeuvre d'art*. To pass through the *Bridge*, it is necessary to conform to the architectural design. What appear to be walls in the birth canal are actually layers of tissues or membranes that the emerging subject must penetrate. Far from facilitating passage, the difficult space of the *Bridge* impedes movement by repeatedly interrupting and dislocating the subject. Each room is designed to disrupt the structures of perception in a distinctive way.

The Reverse-Symmetry Transverse-Envelope Hall, a typical instance of a tentative constructed plan, reduces the number of objects to be taken into consideration, while increasing the number of surfaces offered up for processing. Standing within this constructed-out plan, a participant is able to make use of the layout of the surface she is facing to get a sense of how things have been apportioned on the surface that is directly behind her; similarly, the vertical surfaces to her left and to her right share a single scheme for the positioning of their elements. . . . Having to undertake only half the amount of active perceiving that might otherwise be needed, the perceiver may be able to secure for herself some hesitations in the generalizing process known as making a world. With the great reduction in number of specific perceptual events having to be attended to, due to the high level of repetition of large segments of compositional elements, raw perceptual energymatter, freed from the usual obligation of having to be translated immediately into a part of the whole, will hover possibly more noticeably on or about perceptual landing sites. New ways of perceptual landing sites being engaged are likely to come from this.¹⁸

For those who linger patiently *in* the work of art, repeated disruptions and dislocations gradually begin to undo the sense of the world and to open new, previously unimagined worlds of experience.

Despite the rigor of the exercises preformed, the apprehension of perception always remains incomplete. The impossibility of closing the circle of reflection is not only the function of changes wrought in the subject; nor is it the result of infinitely proliferating structures of subjectivity and worlds of experience. The subject's return to itself is always interrupted by a *residue* that neither perception nor conception can grasp:

Following each reassembling, there is left a residue of blank, an accumulating of. As long as it remains more or less undifferentiated, this accumulation turned to action, or field of action, continues as a blank projection. The extent of this accumulation of blank determines the rate of both formation of a fiction of place and the ultimate stability and flavor of it.¹⁹

The unassimilable remainder of perception cannot be figured—it is both unrepresentable and incalculable. Its presence is traced by a certain absence, and its absence is marked by a certain presence. The absence-presence/presence-absence of the residue is blank:

Above all, they wished to find out how perceiving could enter what it could. At its limits, what stood hovering, and in what way? A graduated penetrability in and around what? How much traction could perceiving have on what was being perceived anyway? They came up with the notion of a perceptual tread. If something were traversed to be entered, this would have had to have happened by means of these treads, this treading. Between the treads, always the generalizing blank would lie in all its specificity—all full of non-images in a wide-spread non-eye.²⁰

Blank Blank Blank

Blank is the space-time of the not; it is neither nothing nor something. Neither existing nor not existing, neither being nor nonbeing, blank is



Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question (detail)

Shells and film footage will be projected onto the mesh-screen floor of The Planet's Cry. The river will always be visible through, and be a part of, the projected images.

not meaningless, though it is not meaningful. The not of blank is implicated in meaning in such a way that it remains not simply insignificant. While there is no meaning without blank, blank itself is not meaningful. Neither meaningful nor meaningless, neither sensible nor senseless, blank clears the space of meaning by withdrawing. The appearance of the not as blank is the disappearance that allows appearance to appear. This withdrawal is unspeakable, for it is "an event preceding language."²¹ "With all the preconceptions gone, what would be left would be blank perceiving."²² But how is "blank perceiving" to be understood?

"Blank perceiving" must not be confused with perceiving blank. While blank is as necessary for perception as it is for meaning, its absence-presence/presence-absence continues to be imperceptible. Thus blank perceiving is perceiving not. The erasure of preconceptions does not allow one to perceive blank but renders perception impossible. And yet, blank is the not, which is at work in all perception. Though the perceiving subject is, to a certain extent, its own creator, it nevertheless is not autonomous but is a modification or modulation of a more encompassing process. Arakawa and Gins use various terms to describe this process: "energymatter," "worldenergy," "massenergy," "spacetime," and "spacetime-matter." Never inert, the process in question pulsates endlessly in contrasting rhythms that are suggested by the word "cleaving." To "cleave" (from the Greek *glyph*, to cut with a knife or carve, and the Latin *glubere*, to peel) means to part or divide by a cutting blow, to split, to intersect, to fissure, to separate. There is, however, a contrasting cadence to "cleave." "Cleave" means not only divide, separate, split, and fissure, but also adhere, stick, and cling. Cleaving simultaneously divides and joins, separates and unites. The ambiguous activity of cleaving, Arakawa and Gins insist, is "ubiquitous":

Cleaving appears to us to be a basic operative factor in the conducting of the world. The world, energymatter, might be said to cohere by means of cleaving, or cleaving, a simultaneous dividing and rejoining, ubiquitously provides this coherence. We would like to say that this instantaneous non-sticking adherence, all in discrete parts, continually separable and separating out, serves as source and substratum for all action.²³

This "omnipresent" substratum is blank perceiving. The perceiving agent is a concrete embodiment of the substratum of cleaving. "In other words, within 'here,' a segment of the process is cleaving apart to be isolated as it is cleaved together to a denoting of itself as 'the segment that is in the process of separating out.'"²⁴ The subject is bound to and distinguished from the "spacetime-matter" continuum that operates in all times and places:

Everywhere is cleaving: massenergy cleaves itself, cleaves to and from itself. In this way, it makes from and of itself dimensions and turns itself gradually into various tissues of density.

Where fiction of place steps, edge blank eddies.
There is no space, no dimension apart from perceiving.²⁵

The activity of the subject repeats the rhythms of cleaving. Perception, for example, involves both a distinguishing and a relating in which the particular object is simultaneously differentiated from and associated with the context where it is embedded. Like Wallace Stevens's jar in Tennessee, the cleaving of perception assembles a world:

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.²⁶

The wild of the wilderness is the forest through which Heidegger cuts his *Holzwege*.²⁷ The cleavage opened by the jar on a hill reinscribes the clearing that Heidegger identifies with the origin of the work of art. Exploring this origin in *Holzwege*, Heidegger explains, "A construction, a Greek temple, images nothing. It simply stands in the midst of a rock-cleft valley." The temple images nothing by holding open the differential interval of the between:

Standing there, the construction rests on rocky ground. This resting of the work draws up out of the rock the obscurity of the rock's monstrous yet spontaneous support. Standing there, the construction holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so makes the storm itself manifest in its violence. The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing by grace of the sun, yet first bring to light the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The secure tower makes visible the invisible space of air. The steadfastness of the work contrasts with the surge of the surf, and its own repose brings out the raging of the sea. Tree and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter into their distinctive forms and thus come to appear as what they are.²⁸

Neither eagle nor bull, tree nor grass, snake nor cricket is original, for each arises in and through the work of art. The origin of art is an "original" cleaving that makes possible all such paired opposites. The work of

art works by opening this opening. Heidegger opens his essay “The Origin of the Work of Art” by asking, “Where and how does art occur?” “Art,” he concludes, “breaks open an open place.” In the space and time of this opening, disclosure and concealment repeatedly intersect in a play of differences that constitutes “the essential strife” of “world,” that is, “self-disclosing openness” and “earth,” that is, “the essentially self-secluding.”⁴⁹ The artwork works by setting up the world as the region within which Being and beings emerge, and setting forth earth as the sheltering domain where they withdraw. The alternating strife of world and earth forms the “tear” (*Riss*) of cleaving:

But as a world opens itself, the earth comes to rise up. It stands forth as that which bears all, as that which is sheltered in its own law and always self-secluding. World demands its decisiveness and its measure and lets beings extend into the open of their paths. Earth, bearing and jutting strives to keep itself closed and to entrust everything to its law. The strife is not a tear [*Riss*] as the gaping crack of a pure cleft, but the strife is the intimacy with which combatants belong to each other. This tear pulls the opponents together in the origin of their unity by virtue of their common ground. It is a basic design [*Grundriss*], an outline sketch [*Aufriss*], that draws the basic features of the rise of the lighting of beings. This tear does not let the opponents burst apart; it brings the opposition of measure and boundary into their common outline [*Umriß*].⁵⁰

The strife of the tear captures the duplicity of cleaving. The tear of cleaving, we have observed, alternates between two rhythms—one centrifugal, the other centripetal. By holding open this alternating difference, the origin of the work of art simultaneously joins and separates. This separation that joins and joining that separates transforms the tear of cleaving into the tear of pain:

But what is pain? Pain tears or rends [*risst*]. It is the tear or rift [*Riss*]. But it does not tear apart into dispersive fragments. Pain indeed tears asunder, it separates, yet in such a way that it at the same time draws everything together to itself. Its rending, as a separating that gathers, is at the same time that drawing, which, like the predrawing and sketch, draws and joins together what is held apart in separation. Pain is the joining in the tearing/rending that divides and gathers. Pain is the joining or articulation of the rift. The joining is the threshold. It delivers the between, the mean of the two that are departed in it. Pain articulates the rift of the difference. Pain is difference itself.⁵¹

The site of cleaving is the bridge that gathers together what it holds apart and holds apart what it gathers together. The pain of cleaving is a symptom of the rending caused by reversing destiny. To reroute perception is to re-form the subject. Such re-formation sunders what it re-creates. The negotiation of the *difference* between the old and the new is

inevitably painful. Though dreadful, this pain is also strangely pleasurable. The pleasure of such pain is the excess of ecstasy—“the most perspicuous of ecstasies”:

“The Process in Question” wends its way as the “Bridge of Reversible Destiny.” This construction takes on the open enigma of perception post-utopianly. The post-utopia spirit is the one that has found the means no longer to have fearfully to dally with any set of given necessities whatsoever. Take destiny, or the inevitable, fateful progression of the human condition, and reverse that. The “Bridge of Reversible Destiny” will set the species in question on this path. A creature of the post-utopian era exacts out across its thinking field place-forming images of how to position oneself or an evolving to that maximum demanded by the most perspicuous of ecstasies. For this to happen, every detail must be attended to and all processes in question should be exaggerated and prolonged.⁵²

For Arakawa and Gins, the end of the modernist dream of utopia does not mean the impossibility of salvation. Lingering in the shadow cast by the white light of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Arakawa and Gins still dream, still hope—dream and hope passionately, desperately, perhaps even impossibly. In the postutopian world, they believe, only art can save us. Saving art reverses destiny in such a way that it becomes possible “to elude mortality”: “Reversible destiny architects stand opposed to mortality on all counts and take their project to be the constructing of those conditions that will make it possible for this vile destiny to be reversed. They propose to construct sensoria that will be capable of eluding mortality.”⁵³ The destiny of mortality is reversed when perceiving is perceived in all its richness, density, and complexity. We have discovered that this perception involves both the apprehension of the activity of the perceiving subject and the acknowledgment of the not in the blank of all perceiving. Blank marks the “zone of diffuse receding” where everything is destined to proceed.⁵⁴ In Heidegger’s terms, blank is “the essentially self-secluding” whose withdrawal clears the space for the “self-disclosing openness” named “world.” The origin of the work of art is the cleavage in which all things arise and pass away. As the event or nonevent that precedes even the microevents of perceiving, the origin of art is a “BRANCH OF THE UNSAID.”⁵⁵ Though unspeakable, the UNSAID releases the word without which the world cannot be created. “In the beginning was the word”; before the beginning was the UNSAID. Ever unspeakable, the UNSAID is the NAMELESS that haunts every name and all naming. When art saves, the creator of the wor(l)d discovers the rending ecstasy of “THE SHARING OF NAMELESS.”⁵⁶

THE SHARING OF NAMELESS . . . BRANCH OF THE UNSAID . . . The *Bridge of Reversible Destiny* is suspended, or is supposed to be suspended, above a river. A river whose flow is endless and, in a certain sense, unspeakable. The UNSAID “appears” by disappearing in the gaps—as the

not of perception. The river over which the *Bridge* is suspended is a BRANCH OF THE UNSAID. While never present, this river nonetheless flows through us all. To retrace the meandering of the BRANCH OF THE UNSAID is to rediscover the garden that is our end:

Unconditionally to live, that is what a post-utopia might offer in contrast, yes, even to a utopia, with its more conservative range of promises, from universal plumbing, more equality, down to, quite likely, more uniformity in belief. No, the post-utopia has nothing to offer except a chance finally to *know* what you are doing. (Every post-utopia would call forth, for the sake of a working out of the details, its own utopia.) This would be a garden of Eden of epistemology, and more.¹⁷

Much, much more. To enter *Bridge of Reversible Destiny* is to assume a destiny that is irreversible.

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o
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Saving not
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Not saving
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Art of saving not
o
Saves art
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That saves not
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By not spending
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Or spending not
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To not
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To die
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To die
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To not
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o o o

And yet . . . and yet . . . and yet, is it ours to not to die? Or is to die

precisely the not we must learn to live? To live not might be the only way to live, and not to live not might be not to live.

o o o

Beyond *Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question*, toward the back of the gallery, in a side room, there was another installation: *Stuttering God*, 1988–90. I cannot show you this work; it has been disassembled and there are no photographs of it. Even if there were photos, images could only represent what the work is not. I do not know whether there are any plans for its reassembly; (its) absence might be irrecoverable.

As I approached *Stuttering God*, I met a friend who was terribly distraught. She paused only long enough to mumble, “I can’t enter, I just can’t do it!” Soft light cast a strange glow throughout the narrow empty room. On the far wall, two perfectly symmetrical openings were veiled by beige curtains. In the absence of signs, it was impossible to know which was the entrance and which the exit. Cautiously drawing back one of the veils, I stared into the darkness of the work of art. After a moment’s hesitation, I entered the darkness. I could see nothing; I could perceive not. Or so I thought.

No sooner had I turned a corner in the passageway I was following than something soft but abrasive hit me in the face, sending my glasses flying. As I reached out to try to find my glasses, my watch band caught on a net that suddenly seemed to engulf me. For a brief instant, panic overwhelmed me. Struggling blindly to free myself, I felt caught in a trap from which there was no escape. Gradually, I untangled my arm and began to grope for my glasses. Afraid that someone else would enter the maze and accidentally crush them, I anxiously ran my hands over the dark floor. After several sweeps of the area, I suddenly felt the metal frame. In the midst of *Stuttering God*, I could see no better with than without my glasses. The darkness remained impenetrable.

Glasses recovered, I turned and started down the passageway again. This time I had a better sense of what to expect. Proceeding slowly with hands outstretched, I encountered a wall that seemed to be made of plastic bags filled with some indefinable material, surrounded by plastic netting. To proceed in this obscure labyrinth, I had to force my way through the dense tissue of plastic. Beyond the net in which I had been caught, there were more obstacles. Webbed bags of plastic clung to the walls, hung from above, and littered the floor. Passage was almost impossible. Without sight to guide me, my other senses became more acute—especially touch and hearing.

Realizing that after coming this far, there was no difference between forging ahead and turning back, I paused to ponder my situation. It slowly became obvious to me that *Stuttering God* was actually an extension of *Bridge of Reversible Destiny*. Abandoned in my blindness, the whole world became a “Helen Keller Room.” Having crossed the threshold that was both an entrance and an exit, I had become part of the work of art. Indeed, the work of art was now working on me by beginning to trans-

form me into something other than what I previously had been. If I allowed the work time to work, if I lingered in the work instead of rushing through it, I might actually become the work of art.

I proceeded more slowly. The passageway bent to the left and turned back on itself. Less preoccupied with finding the way out, I realized that my eyes had grown accustomed to the darkness. Though I still could see nothing, I was able to discern dim shapes and obscure forms. Since they kept receding as I approached, I was never able to figure out what they were. I do, however, believe something was there.

As I followed the turns in the course, I realized that I was beginning to move in a circle. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught a glimpse of a tiny point of light—white light—to my left. Pushing bags and nets aside, I traced the beam of light to its source. It was a peephole, no bigger than a quarter, which was reminiscent of the cleft in Duchamp's *Étant donnés*. Gazing into the gap, I did not discover a naked woman spread before me but saw nothing other than light passing through miniature reproductions of the black mesh that forms *Bridge of Reversible Destiny*. I was not sure whether I was peeking through glass, clear plastic, or a small magnifying lens. The question of proportion seemed important but unanswerable.

Turning from the light, I again entered the darkness. More nets, webs, grids, and bags rushed to meet me. Like an explorer growing better accustomed to new terrain, I became more adept at making my way through the tangled weave of the membranes that gave me pause. The more adroit I became in negotiating obstacles, the more deliberately I had to avoid rushing through the passageway. Patience is a difficult lesson to learn. Sometimes I simply stood thoughtfully for several moments; once I even sank to the floor and sat silently. Throughout it all, no one else appeared; I was alone . . . absolutely alone.

The longer I roamed, the more points of light I discovered—four, maybe five, perhaps more. Each was similar, though not identical. In every opening, the light was blocked, deflected, interrupted by screens within screens, grids within grids, webs within webs, and nets within nets. All black. The play of black on white created a tissue of texts more obscure than any I had ever read. It was not clear whether all of the holes were cut into a central column—to create something like an incised phallus in the middle or the labyrinth. Nor was it clear whether all the gaps opened onto the same space. Each cleavage could have been a separate opening that was only a few inches deep. Forever defracted, it was impossible to know whether the light was (the) One. One crack especially fascinated me. Unlike the other openings, this one was not a square or a rectangle; it was shaped like an L—an inverted L. What was this L? How was this L to be read? Was Arakawa and Gins's L a parody of Duchamp's *ELLE*? Or was L a pseudonym for EL? And why was L inverted? Might the inverted L be the name of the nameless who cannot speak and is not the word but can only stutter? As questions multiplied, the points of light threatened to become pointless—senseless points of nonsense.

If the tissue of the labyrinth repeats or anticipates the texture of the (unbuilt) *Bridge*, the radiance of the light (or lights) reflects the flow of the



Truncated Cone, Critical Resemblances, 1979-91
Acrylic on wood, copper, rubber net, steel, and wire mesh, approximately 13 feet high, 22 feet in diameter

river. River and light: BRANCHES OF THE UNSAID. To see the light—directly, immediately, here and now—is to SHARE THE NAMELESS. Light is God . . . God is Light . . . the Light that dispels darkness. The Light in the center of the labyrinth saves by showing the way out.

But can (the) light be seen? Is it visible or invisible? Perceived or perceived not? The vision of pure light is blinding. In the moment of illumination—if such a moment there be—light becomes darkness and darkness becomes light. For light to appear, it must disappear. Shadows not only obscure; they also illuminate. Is the presence of light the absence of darkness or the presence of darkness the absence of light? Light and dark . . . black and white . . . a play . . . a “textual” play in which everything and nothing are entangled. The presence-absence/absence-presence of light-darkness opens the opening in which appearances appear and disappear. To be drawn into the play of appearing/disappearing is to be drawn into the draw of withdrawing. To think the withdrawing that allows appearing/disappearing to appear and disappear, it is necessary to think with-

drawing with drawing. Whether directly or indirectly, drawing underlies painting and architecture. But what is drawing?

It is difficult to know where to begin or to end. To draw, which derives from *dhragh* (to draw, drag on the ground) means, among other things—many other things: to pull, drag, contract, shrink, distort; to pull (as a curtain or veil) over something to conceal it; to pull (a curtain or veil) away from something to reveal it; to render into another language or style of writing, translate; to bear, endure, suffer, undergo; to adduce, bring forward; to turn aside, pervert; to add, subtract, multiply; to attract by physical or moral force; to pull out, extract; to deduce, infer; to select by lot; to cause to flow; to take in (as air), breathe; to take out, receive, obtain (money, salary, revenues) from a source; to empty, drain, exhaust, deplete; to stretch, extend, elongate; to straighten out by pulling; to represent, mould, model; to frame; to compose; to track (game by scent); to trace (a figure) by drawing a pencil, pen, or the like across the surface; to cut a furrow by drawing a ploughshare through the soil; to draw a line to determine or define the limit between two things or groups; to lay down a definite limit of action beyond which one refuses to go; to pull or tear in pieces, asunder; to bring together, gather, collect, assemble; to leave undecided (a battle or game). . . . “Drawing” is irreducibly duplicitous. Its meaning cannot be penned down, for it is constantly shifting and changing between opposites it neither unites nor divides: distorting/straightening, adding/subtracting, taking in/taking out, bringing forward/turning aside, revealing/concealing, pulling together/tearing asunder. The meaning of “draw(ing)” forever remains undecided. In this word, meaning itself is a draw. To say “withdrawing” with drawing—to say “withdrawing” without withdrawing saying, one cannot avoid stuttering.

Though the meaning of “drawing” is undecidable, its stuttering involves the rhythms we have discerned in “the origin of the work of art.” This “origin” is not a foundation or ground but an abyss, or *Ungrund*, that never appears as such but “appears” only by withdrawing. When withdrawing is figured with drawing, it appears to be the appearance of the disappearance. To be drawn into the draw of (with)drawing—to linger in the draw with drawing—is to be drawn to a void that cannot be a-voided. This void “is” no more emptiness than it is fullness, no more nonbeing than being. It is beyond what is and what is not:

And yet—beyond what is, not away from it but before it, there is an other that occurs. In the midst of beings as a whole, there is an open place. This is a clearing, a lighting. Thought of in relation to what is, to beings, this clearing is in a greater degree than are beings. This open center, therefore, is not surrounded by what is; rather, the lighting middle itself encircles all that is, like the nothing we hardly know.⁴⁸

This is the open center (un)figured in *Stuttering God*: “The nothing we hardly know.” The work of art does not reconcile opposites but articulates differences. Articulation is a separating that gathers and a gathering that separates. When neither movement can be reduced to the other,

only stuttering remains. Stuttering speaks not without not speaking. The question of *Stuttering God* is whether this stuttering is the uttering of God.

As soft pink light filtered through the veil, the darkness slowly withdrew. But things became no clearer. I made my way toward the exit or entrance, which was really neither an exit nor an entrance. Outside had become inside in a monstrous labyrinth from which there was no withdrawing.

What was *Stuttering God* doing to me? What had (a) stuttering God been doing to me for years . . . many, many years? I turned back and reentered *Stuttering God*. This time I would reverse my course and maybe my destiny. I was not sure I had seen all the blanks. Perhaps in one of the gaps no textures—webs, nets, grids, tissues, membranes—obscured vision. Perhaps it was not necessary to perceive not. Perhaps to perceive not is to perceive the nonsense that inhabits all sense. Perhaps. But I was no longer certain . . . certain whether to perceive not was to perceive or not to perceive. What *does* it mean to perceive not?

o o o
Failingly
the blank
returns
not
o
o
o



- This essay was first published in Mark C. Taylor, *Notes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 96–121.
- 1 Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 152–53.
 - 2 See Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, trans. Reginald Snell (New York: Friedrich Ungar, 1977).
 - 3 Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in Gregory Battcock, ed., *The New Art: A Critical Anthology*, (New York: E. P. Dutton), p. 101.
 - 4 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).
 - 5 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lugs (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 44.
 - 6 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. xi–xii.
 - 7 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 33.
 - 8 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, p. 49.
 - 10 Arakawa and Madeline Gins, "Reversible Destiny" (1990), manuscript, p. 2. It is important to note that Hegel also begins his phenomenology of spirit with an analysis of the "here"; see G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 58–65.
 - 11 Arakawa and Gins, *Pour ne pas mourir/To Not to Die*, trans. François Rosso (Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1987), p. 108.
 - 12 Arakawa and Gins, "The Tentative Constructed Plan as Intervening Device (for a Reversible Destiny)" (1989), manuscript, p. 1 (hereafter referred to as "Tentative Constructed Plan"). Subsequently published in *A+U* (Tokyo), no. 255 (December 1991), pp. 48–51 (English), 52–55 (Japanese).
 - 13 *Ibid.*
 - 14 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 - 15 Arakawa and Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, new 3rd ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), p. 7.
 - 16 Arakawa and Gins, "Tentative Constructed Plan," p. 4.
 - 17 Arthur C. Danto, "Gins and Arakawa: Building Sensoriums," *The Nation*, October 15, 1990, p. 431.
 - 18 Arakawa and Gins, "Tentative Constructed Plan," pp. 6–7.
 - 19 Arakawa and Gins, *To Not to Die*, p. 70.
 - 20 Arakawa and Gins, "Reversible Destiny," p. 15.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
 - 22 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
 - 23 Arakawa and Gins, "Tentative Constructed Plan," p. 3.
 - 24 Arakawa and Gins, "Reversible Destiny," p. 5.
 - 25 Arakawa and Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, p. 151.
 - 26 Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar," in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1981), p. 70.
 - 27 See Heidegger, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1972).
 - 28 Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 41–42.
 - 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 47–48.
 - 30 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
 - 31 *Ibid.*, p. 204.
 - 32 Arakawa and Gins, "Reversible Destiny," p. 2.
 - 33 Arakawa and Gins, "Tentative Constructed Plan," pp. 7–8.
 - 34 Arakawa and Gins, "Reversible Destiny," p. 9.
 - 35 Arakawa and Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, p. 105.
 - 36 *Ibid.*
 - 37 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 - 38 Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 53.

facing page

View of entrances/exits, Arakawa and Gins with Johannes Knesl, **Stuttering God**
1988–90
Included in *Building Sensoriums*, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York
September–October 1990



Bridge of Reversible Destiny/The Process in Question 1973-89 (detail)
 Plastic, wire mesh, and wood, 42 feet x 13 feet 10 inches x 5 feet 10 1/4 inches overall

This detail of the bridge shows the segment named Than Which No Other

Judging Landing Sites

ANDREW BENJAMIN

There is, perhaps, the obligation to conclude. Writing up an experiment concludes. Time will have passed. Actions, additions, and results will have been noted. In the end, there is a form of finality. It is over. Such a conception of experimentation and the related judging of results yields its own narrative impulse. The continuity of the sequential events will become the structuring force of the narrative itself. How, then, is it possible to write about a process that resists an end because it holds open the insistence of a future—not a future to be projected but a future that opens up within the process of living, or living out, forms of reversal? In this instance, it will be essential to allow this question its fragility. Rather than incorporate it into another moment yielding its own stylistic imperatives, it must endure as a question. In this essay, there is an attempt to identify moments whose connection and reconnection may have to be established—moments that respond to this question. By remaining responses—perhaps the most tentative form of answer—these moments continue to allow that inscription of futural possibilities that falls within the present's own *vita activa*.

OPENING UBIQUITY

Once architectural considerations become central, place will have become one of the key philosophical terms for thinking the positionality of human activity. Human activity is already in a place. That place and the necessity to occupy it in certain ways—one way rather than another—serve to act out a form of destiny. What makes dwelling fateful is the necessity of the shelter/sheltered relationship: a relation of mutually reinforcing reciprocity. Destiny, then, is not a project but the living out of a dominant tradition: living in relation to the work of an inescapable gift. Not only does this setup define the place of human activity, it also delimits the space of what Arakawa and Madeline Gins describe as “reversible destiny.” Destiny already has a place; that place is, in a sense, ubiquitous. As activity, and thus as expressive of being human, the place of tradition becomes part of the formulation of the being of being human. Robbed of either a sentimental humanism or a crass empiricism, the human can be provisionally understood as already being in place. It has a site. It is possible to start with this level of generality—start but not finish—since place will initially have an inevitable ubiquity. As Arakawa and Gins write:

All that surrounds a person: ubiquitous site.

The set of all landing sites of and for a person: ubiquitous site.

A ubiquitous (landing) site: the sum of all landing sites.

The sum of all landing sites equals a person or body plus world.¹

Part of occupying any site will be the recognition by the occupant of its presence as a site. Yet, recognition is not straightforward. There will have to be the recognition that a site is being observed. Experience is not a given. In fact, recognition should be understood as the consequence of having come to an experience, in addition to being the consequence of that which occasioned it. There will have to be the incorporation within, and as part of the sited activity, of that recognition. Arakawa and Gins are attentive to the differing ways these determinations unfold. Indeed, within their undertakings there is an important reworking of the phenomenology of perception.

Addressing the question of recognition, Arakawa and Gins locate the place of ubiquity in their description of a *Ubiquitous Site House*. Their formulation opens up the site's own center. It works to force open a place that, in being ubiquitous, will always have been more. It is worthwhile guarding the movement signaled by a recognition occurring after the event; the afterward effect works to define the event itself. The moment of constitution, being in fact a type of reconstitution, obviates the risk of positing a simple origin that becomes complex:

Shape precludes entry, but entry can happen upon a resident's forceful insertion of herself into the pliant, half-structured muddle. The living spaces form with each step taken. When no such actions are taken, there is no room to breathe. Sifting through chaos in search of what can be perpetuated, residents embrace the ubiquitous site—the site of the body-person taken as being all over the place, as a ubiquitous sitting—as both pal and clue.²

Movement through the house brings with it the recognition of the necessary ubiquity of sitedness. The importance of this recognition is that residents are turned toward their being in place. What vanishes in this turning is the possibility of effecting a separation between body and per-



Study for Perceptual Landing Sites (II) 1981-85
Plastic, wire mesh, and wood. 72 inches high, 48 inches in diameter

son. *Ubiquitous Site House* does not house the embodied individual, nor does it house the individual's body. What is involved here is an experimental possibility in which being housed—a place of shelter—touches the body, forcing through the recognition that, as the body unfolds, place may be continually transformed and opened by that movement. Body—and here it is essential to write “body,” not in opposition to mind nor in its reduction to the physiological, but as itself part of the site through which personhood is articulated, “body-person”—cannot be extracted from its place. Nor can place be allowed a presence that is other than its already being—and already having been—encountered and worked upon by the work of the body. The body's work, its place in this almost impossible place, is the activity of being itself, so that Arakawa and Gins write from a more generalized sense of ubiquity:

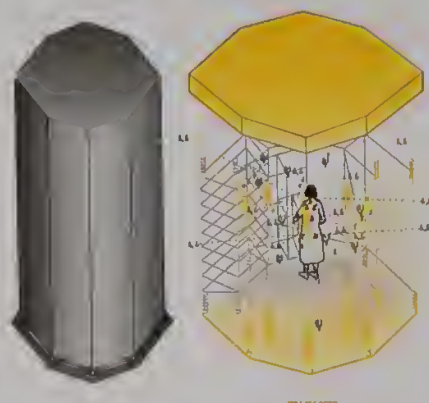
The size of the ubiquitous site depends on the intensity of the perceiver's passion or concern. Simply by sensing herself to be where she is, a person defines a ubiquitous site within a locally circumscribed area. With the ubiquitous site outlined, the extent to which the view is determined by tactile and kinaesthetic sensations becomes more readily noticeable.³

Arising in this passage is the difficult question of the impingement of site, and once again there would have to be concomitant recognition that being sited—in fact, sitedness—is already the body's position; consequently, there is ubiquity. This passage, therefore, announces the already positioned nature of body becoming “more readily noticeable.”

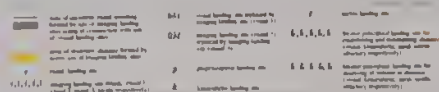
The question of how something becomes “noticeable” will have to take the incorporation of that which effects experience as an integral part of being positioned. The ubiquitous site, rather than giving rise to the possibility of what in the end would have to be a feigned neutrality, is itself already the instantiated presence of the immediacy of being sited. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility of that transformative experience in which the insistent reality of already being positioned—positioned bodily by the work of being sited—is revealed. What would come to be revealed in such a procedure would be the fact that any site is already overdetermined, bringing with it an already present set of associated values. What is opened up by this transformative experience is the possibility of alterity. Here, what this means is the possibility of other places and perhaps different sites. As always, the demanding question will be “how is difference understood, how is difference to be established?” Part of the answer to the question of establishing differences is that the answer emerges in the process of living within Arakawa and Gins's experimental houses. Living out destiny within a reversible destiny house provides the precondition for movement, and here the movement will be lived. Bodily movement itself provides the possibility of reversible destiny.

Part of the activity of being human involves the possibility of envisaging, of allowing for, other places. Otherness need not take on a utopian perspective. It can include a transfiguration or transformation of an already present place, or it can involve complex determinations in which alterity resists the utopian by allowing for a connection that in being connected, in being part of the same, will also be different. It is this latter possibility that marks the presence of the logic of the apart/a part.⁴ While it may seem an odd formulation, it remains the case that working with the abeyance of the utopian means that connection will be predicated on being apart, and alterity will figure because that which is other will always form a part. Then, within the terms set by the difficult sense of place, it becomes possible to situate what Arakawa and Gins have called “landing sites.” Neither utopian nor apocalyptic, the “landing site” opens up the need to think affirmation and critique as emerging from the moment in which logic, the apart/a part, has taken over the thinking of place. More exactly, the insistent presence of this logic will provide the criterion in terms of which projected landing sites will be able to be judged.

Perceptual Landing Sites (I)

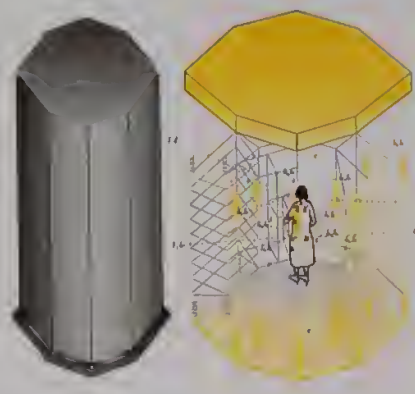


Many different types of perceptual landing sites participate in the building of the view.



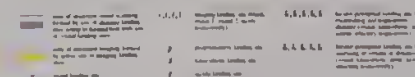
Perceptual Landing Sites (I)
Chart 1 1981-85

Perceptual Landing Sites (I)



In a tentative constructed plan, things are not so much themselves as plans for themselves. All possibilities are in the open.

Within a symmetrical tentative constructed plan, perceivers can see what's in front of them to know what's behind them. How visual landing sites engage the view can be taken as an indication of how incoming landing sites visual 21 must be perceived.



Perceptual Landing Sites (I)
Chart 2 1983-85

Rather than an experimental practice aimed at proving or demonstrating what is already known, the experiments of Arakawa and Gins—recently, building practice as a form of experimentation—bring with them a different set of demands. What they necessitate is that consideration be given to the ground of assessment. In other words, in what terms are these constructions to be evaluated? Answering this question involves having to attribute a specific intentional logic to what has been undertaken: the works themselves. Rather than addressing the project of attribution directly, it will be approached via another route. In this instance, centrality will be given to the conceptual demands made by this reworking of place and site. In other words, rather than giving a mere description of what is envisaged, the projects must themselves be allowed to bear upon how it is that a description could come to be given in the first place. Such an approach allows for a certain fragility, since what is being retained as central is an investigation of the thinking necessary for any repositioning of site. Of course, to the extent that it becomes possible to reposition a site—thus allowing for another possibility—this rehearses the initial separation of architecture and building in the precise sense that

what is at stake is reducible not to relocating or repositioning of building but to establishing another architecture.

ARCHITECTURAL UBIQUITY

In a way, the opening of a site as an engagement with the architectural becomes central. And yet to ask “what is architecture?” is by no means to ask a simple question. Simplicity is distanced for two reasons. In the first place, architecture refuses any easy reduction to building. In the second, it emerges from the argument against the possibility that there could be an essence of the architectural. Refusing the question of the essence—and this refusal will occur for reasons as much philosophical as architectural—means that the question “what is architecture?” will have moved away from both the pragmatic, the place of the reduction of architecture to building, and the essential and toward another domain. From now on, rather than a reiteration of the pragmatic or a repetition of the same, this latter form of repetition being an integral part of the essential, the question concerning the particularity of architecture will already have been staged within another form of repetition. Rather than a repetition of the

essence—and here, as has been suggested, that would need to be understood as a repetition of the same—there would need to be a repetition, but it would have to be one that allowed for real possibilities of intervention, for the possibilities of other architectures and other building practices.

How could there be this other possibility, could this possibility be in fact real, even come to be realized, if the architectural is still given within a structure of repetition? This is, of course, the question of change at its most emphatic. Equally, it is the question of alterity in its most demanding form. Answering both questions hinges on accepting the possibility that repetition itself does not have an essential quality; as with architecture, there is no “itself” to be repeated. Repetition will have differing and irreducible modalities, all of which work to repeat.

Architecture will always need to be both identified and reidentified. Once it becomes necessary to hold architecture and building as distinct though related enterprises, identification and reidentification cannot amount to empirical claims about the presence of certain buildings. (It will be the problem of the presence of the empirical—within both the structure of the landing site and Arakawa and Gins’s phenomenology of perception—that will necessitate always having to trace the details of any one site’s own operation.) What occurs in both these activities is a repetition. There is a repetition. What, however, is being repeated? Answering this question is initially unproblematic. What is being repeated is the ineliminable reciprocity between shelter and the sheltered. Architecture is this reciprocity; it is the work of this reciprocity. There cannot be one without the other. Shelter and sheltered are necessarily bound together.

Operating on this level, however, would be to hold to the inherent neutrality of the landing site. The moment this claim for neutrality is made—almost at the moment that will cause its apparent simplicity to founder—problems emerge. They do not emerge because the initial claim lacks acuity; on the contrary, it could be argued that such a description provides the end of architecture with great precision. Problems emerge because the proposition, despite its truth, demands a form of clarification that would reveal that neither shelter nor the sheltered admit of a singular determination. It is in this sense that any landing site will already be subject to a determination in which the positing of any simple ubiquity retained as an end in itself would have to be challenged.

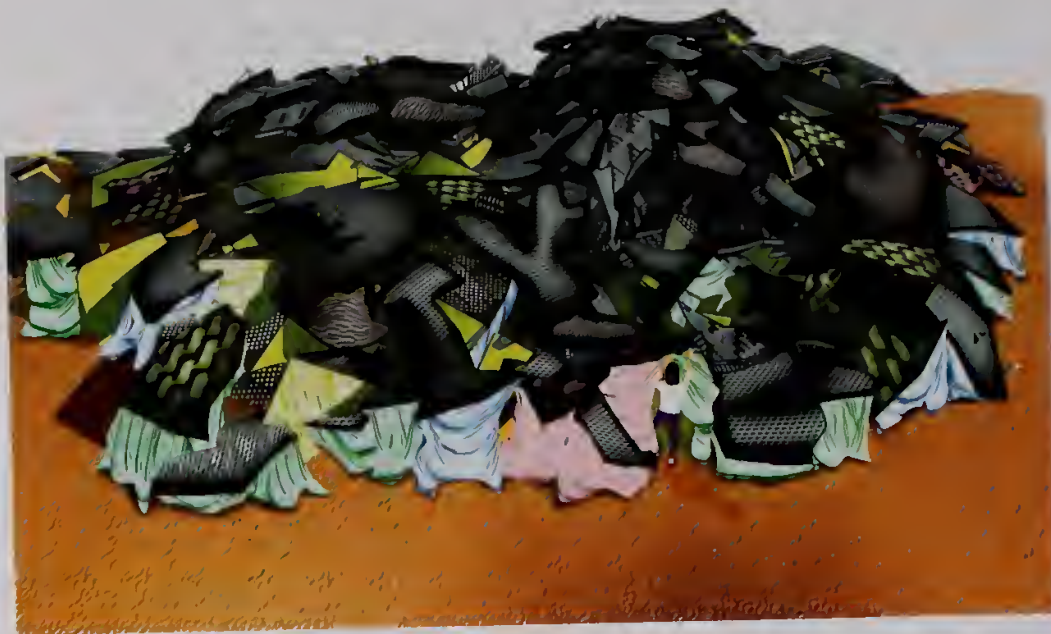
Yet, in any one instance, there may be an implicit singularity. Were there to be a singular determination, it would have to be simple in



Rotofun House 1993

appearance only. What this formulation of the presence of the specific means, however, is that there is an ineliminable, and to that extent necessary, structure of dominance. (The reiteration of the structure is the articulation of tradition, that is, tradition understood as the repetition of dominance in the form of a repetition of the Same.) The way in which the interrelationship between shelter and the sheltered takes form provides, for example, the architectural presence of the domestic, which is usually thought to take one predominant and overriding form; it provides the structured presence of pedagogy and has, by definition, its own architecture. A list would include the range of human activities that are given by this relationship, and thus by the repetition of that which defines the end of architecture, namely, the primordially of the shelter/sheltered relationship. Because the question of the essence can be put to one side, and because we are constrained to work with the impossibility of architecture’s having a transcendental guide, what emerges with this description is that the site of alterity—the site of change—is what is given by the repetition of dominance. The question concerning the possibility of change, as much as it concerns alterity, is straightforward: how is an intervention into an already present structure of repetition to be effected? Failing to see that what cannot be eliminated is repetition, perhaps even aspiring to be rid of its hold, is to lapse into the varying forms of utopianism or nihilism that hinder and restrict the architectural as much as they do the philosophical.

There is the additional point to be made in this context concerning the



Ubiquitous Site House, 1994-95

utopian. It should not be thought that the utopian is a real possibility. An elimination of repetition will depend upon the use of either a form of architectural or philosophical violence that will in the end be unsuccessful. The attempt to establish such an enterprise depends upon trying to establish a uniformity within, and a hegemony over, what could provisionally be called private or domestic space on the one hand and public space on the other. Such attempts, no matter how praiseworthy in intention, amount to the totalitarian gesture par excellence. Opposing these moves cannot take the form of being opposed to the totalitarian on either moral or ethical grounds, as though that were sufficient in itself. It is rather that an effective opposition can only stem from working with the recognition of the impossibility of completing, and dominating, space. The site of domination becomes, due to that site's inherently incomplete nature, the site where effective critique is possible. It should be clear that this is, on one level, to do no more than argue that the site of intervention is the existent structure understood as the continuity that is realized through repetition. The additional point, however, is that the impossibility of completion will be that which allows for this other possibility. Therefore, the question of continuity, once posed critically, maintains the copresence of both continuity and discontinuity.

Maintaining this complex copresence can occur on two levels; within certain architectural practices they will come to be interrelated. In the first place, it can be maintained in the analysis of the site and thus in the conception of the site as a place of intervention. In the second, it can be

maintained by allowing the copresence of function and dislocation to operate. Complex spacing would emerge within building practice precisely because function and dislocation were copresent. What that would entail is the abstract provisions for a repetition of, for example, the domestic, in which there was the attempt to twist free—a twisting effected by building itself—of the traditional determinations that the domestic will bring with it. This needs to be understood as an abstract description in the precise sense that moving to the particular is not a move from the universal to instances of its presence. It is rather that there can only be particularity. Differing forms of alterity will eschew a link to the essential, repeating thereby the description of architecture, in which—while having to admit of an inscription into a prevailing structure of dominance—a singular essence still cannot be attributed. The reciprocity of shelter and sheltered can only ever take different and irreducible forms.

It is at this point that it is possible to take up one of the reversible destiny homes. Arakawa and Gins's description of *Rotation House* provides a clear instance of the way in which twisting free can be effected by architecture. More important, however, it will be in terms of the architectural that the particular site analysis occasioning this movement will be realized. Here, the claim is literal. Arakawa and Gins argue that it will be in the act of living in these houses that being positioned, being already sited, can be traced; hence, the necessity to recognize the significance of claims about ubiquity. It is in this way that it will become possible to investigate—in the process of living in the house itself—what they describe as reversible destiny.

Of *Rotation House*, they write:

because a continued existence can be constructed only out of a delineated one, reversible destiny cannot even become an issue until the nature and extent of the site of a person have been determined. Residents align themselves with each rotation of the room module, flexing their sites, checking the components of a site of a person, its extent.⁵

There are at least three important dimensions at work in this description. Living in the house will involve repetitions. As the rooms rotate, each resident will continually confront that which in being repeated comes to be other than itself. This opens up the first significant element of the house: the intrusive and productive presence of repetition. Finding oneself—the

Setting a symmetrical tentative constructed plan low into the landscape provisionally orders the view

Within the rubber enclosure, abrupt shifts in perspective and swift transformations of shape are the rule. From moment to moment, its flexible curvilinear change form according to the movements of the people passing through them.

[illegible]

act of location—will be realized through already having been dislocated. Learning about the nature of being sited will occur within, and this will occur as part of the movement toward being resited. In both instances, what is involved is one's position: once more, the positioning of what Arakawa and Gins identify as the body-person. In the movement away, the initial positioning can be plotted. However, what is sketched out—once what is at stake is living in the house itself—comes to the fore only because of the gradual loosening of destiny's hold, a loosening effected as a result of being in the house. It will be in this sense that what emerges as possible is reversible destiny housing. This is both a description of the project as well as an identification of the site of judgment.

upon recognizing that, rather than being viewed as a work already completed, the house continues to be at work. In place of completion, it is necessary to understand the house as working to realize its own project. What this means is that the possibility of the future is not outside nor is it an outside possibility. Rather, the future will have already been inscribed, not within the house either as an ornament or an addition, but as integral to its structuration and to its work. The future is part of the house's own structuring force. However, that location is not prescriptive in the sense that it is the enactment of a utopian possibility, nor is it another form of legislation. The project is that this setup can only arise by living within the house.

Reversal is a process, the movement of living itself. In order to live apart from destiny, it is essential to live through its determinations. To live as a part of its determinations, it is essential to live as a part while at the same time moving apart. The temporality of this mode of living will resist the simple movement of continuity or even progress. Reversible destiny, a possibility revealed by the work of landing sites, demands that time be understood as a discontinuous continuity.

It is the question of the copresence of continuity and discontinuity—a question reiterating the logic of the apart/a part—that has to be addressed to the project of analysis that is also an integral part of the landing site. Arakawa and Gins describe their mode of analysis:

The fabric of the world equals all a person presently perceives plus all she believes she perceives or believes herself to have ever perceived plus all she feels she might perceive. Each instance of perception lands as a site. The fabric of the world consists of numerous sites. It is useful to think of these sites as landing sites. Some landing sites come into existence when a perceiver's perception, whatever that might be, lands as a part of the world. Any discerning that is, to any degree whatsoever, locatable is a landing site. A landing site is simultaneously an event and an event-marker. We use the concept of landing site heuristically for a mapping of the world as pictured as perceived.⁶

Even if pursuing all the details of the distinction between "an event" and "an event-marker" cannot be undertaken here, it is still the case that what cannot be avoided is the question of the event itself and its twofold division. Prior, however, to pursuing the event, more of the detail of their mode of analysis needs to be noted.

Perhaps, the most striking formulation in the above is the retention of what appears to be the presence of perception as a given and as providing a given site. "We use the concept of landing site heuristically for a mapping of the world as pictured as perceived." There cannot be any dispute that perception takes place. Nor can the cartographic impulse working within perception, and arising as a consequence of it, be doubted. There is a necessary connection between the process of perceptual map-



inset: Section model for **Rubber Labyrinth, Critical Resemblances**, 1979-91
Cloth, rubber, wood, and tin, 18 inches high, 42 inches in diameter

Rubber Labyrinth, Critical Resemblances, 1979-91
Colored rubber, tin, and velvet, approximately 13 feet high, 22 feet in diameter



Two views of **Truncated Cone, Critical Resemblances** 1979-91
Acrylic on wood, copper, rubber net, steel, and wire mesh, approximately
13 feet high, 22 feet in diameter



Critical Resemblances is composed of two architectural surrounds—
Rubber Labyrinth (see page 147) and Truncated Cone—that play off
each other

ping and what it is that is perceived; this is a mapping in which an individual may be able to move through a space without having to think how it is that such movement or such a conception of space is in fact possible. The question, however, concerns what cannot be conceived, cannot be attributed a necessary spatiality, and thus cannot be included on the map. By inclusion, what is meant is what is written directly onto the map forming a component of the map itself.

This question—a question of the inclusion of that which cannot be straightforwardly included—does not check the process of mapping. It is meant to question what it is that is mapped and what it is that allows the mapping to occur. The recognition of the world as perceived can be differentiated from the quality to be attributed to what is perceived. This latter cannot be mapped; it is already inscribed within the map since it provides what it is that is mapped. Furthermore, the nature of what is mapped, of what provides the possibility of mapping in the first place, once understood, rids perception, taken as an end in itself, of any lasting value. In other words, once attention is paid to what cannot be mapped but what can provide the possibility for mapping, then perception rather than a starting point would come to be understood as an effect of that which made it possible. Maps, as with the cartographic impulse itself, are necessarily overdetermined. Arguing against such a position would necessitate a radical divide between the physiology of perception and the conditioning of perception by dominant structures of repetition. Once it is allowed that one works with the other, then perception becomes a sec-

ondary effect of that which makes it possible. The difficulty will always be the spatial inscription of what eludes space precisely because it provides it. Accounting for the now complex spatiality of the “provider” involves working with the presence of an immaterial materiality.

While there is the possibility of viewing Arakawa and Gins’s phenomenology of perception as resisting the hold of a founding complexity and to proffer an unproblematic perception as a point of departure, this would fail to grasp the necessity within their work of differing possibilities for complexity. Complexity’s work is harbored, for example, in the claim noted above that “a landing site is simultaneously an event and an event-marker.”

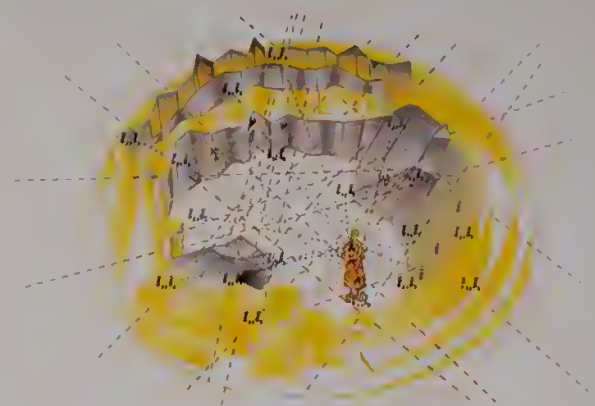
While it may seem arbitrary, the distinction can be understood as a holding between an experience and the registration of that experience. This distinction brings with it an attendant risk. It is always possible to argue that it is a false distinction, and that it is impossible to distinguish between experience and the registration of experience. This claim would be true if the registration pertained purely to the realm of experience. However, it cannot. Even if the registration of an experience can be explicated on the level of experience, it can still be the object of experience; what endures is the inscription of a spacing and, therefore, a necessary distancing between the “event” and the “event-marker.” In other words, the nature of the distinction introduces the need not just to account for its own spacing but to allow for the possibility that such a spacing would either bring with it its own mapping or generate its own

cartographic impulse. What this means is that there is from the beginning an already present spacing that allows for the mapping of a landing site. Accounting for that already present spacing could involve a mere formalism if it were not for the fact that what is given with that initial site—the already present complexity given by an original spacing—is the inscription of the destiny to be reversed and the potential for its being reversed. Admitting, perhaps mapping, the initial spacing includes destiny understood as the work of tradition—it is in this way that the utopian is excised—while holding open the space of another possibility. It is only by holding apart being in place, and the recognition of being in that place, that it is possible to argue that reversible destiny houses allow for the transformation of the body-person. The transformation occurs through being in the house. In a more general sense, when taken together, the “event” and the “event-marker” become a plural event since they maintain an insistent spacing, a present irreducibility that is, of necessity, anoriginally present.⁷

Once it becomes possible to build on Arakawa and Gins’s utilization of the plural event, then it becomes possible to see that the presentation of sequential time—in the movement from the ubiquitous site either to the more specific or the more general—will have to retain the complex spacing demanded by the distinction between event and event marker. Moreover, it will be in terms of the founding intrusion of complexity—there, in the inherently incomplete structure demanded by an inscribed and ineliminable spacing—that it will become possible to trace the work of the logic of the apart/a part, and thus to trace the extent to which there is an intervention into a predominant structure of repetition. The risk will always be there. There will always be the possibility of a reduction in which the singular determinations of space may take over.

Judging in each instance, judging any moment in which there is a concretization of an experiment, is given by what has already been provided, that is, the site of intervention. The given nature of the site means that any landing is already an engagement with repetition. As always, the question will concern the nature of the relationship between what is given—a predominating repetition—and the incursion into that site. This setup is the ubiquitous site of judgment.

Open Containing (II)



Construct not walls but screen-valves.

Combine screen-valves into a thinking diaphragm, an arena for thinking perceiving.

2000	area of maximum visual cluttering limited by use of mapping landing site within its dimensions with visual landing site	V	visual landing site	I, I	mapping landing site (visual + verbal)
	area of maximum mapping limited by action site of mapping landing site	P	perceptual landing site	I_1, I_2, I_3, I_4, I_5	formal geometrical landing site for establishing and expanding dynamic visual relationships, area action (dynamic respectively)
1	visual-verbally landing site	R	representative landing site	I_1, I_2, I_3, I_4, I_5	lower geometrical landing site for establishing of dynamic (visual, linguistic, and verbal) activity
2	abstract, non-representative landing site	L	verbal landing site		

Opening Containing (II) 1983-85

1. Arakawa and Madeline Gins, “Landing Sites” (1990), manuscript.

2. Arakawa and Gins, “Text for Ubiquitous Site House” (1996), manuscript.

3. Arakawa and Gins, “Landing Sites.”

4. I have tried to develop this logic within the analysis of contemporary painting and installations in my *Object Painting* (London: Academy Editions, 1994).

5. Arakawa and Gins, “Text for Rotabon House” (1996), manuscript.

6. Arakawa and Gins, “Landing Sites.”

7. I have developed the “anoriginal” in considerable detail in Andrew Benjamin, *The Plural Event* (London: Routledge, 1993).



above
Landing Site Study 1994

pages 152-53
Horizon Studies 1989

page 155
Constructing the Site, Terrain Studies, 1994

page 156
World Formation through Landing Site Deployment—Helen Keller
1992-93

page 159
Rough Depiction of an Aural Landing Site 1992

page 160
World Formation through Landing Site Deployment—Phantom and
Prosthetic Limbs, 1992

page 161
World Formation through Landing Site Deployment—Arm with
Severed Nerve 1992

page 162
Rough Depiction of Architectural Landing Sites 1992

page 163
World Formation through Landing Site Deployment—Deafblind, 1993

LANDING SITE(S)

always in conjunction with the body

always formed by the body

always in the service of the body

any bit of

locating

convening

surfacing

The world is composed of three types of landing sites: perceptual, imaging, and architectural. All three types of landing sites always figure in the forming of the world: together with a marking of some quality of a here or a there (perceptual landing sites), there is, between areas of perceptual capture, a general filling in of the gaps (imaging landing sites) and an intimation of position (architectural landing sites).

PERCEPTUAL LANDING SITE(S)



always in conjunction with the body
always formed by the body
always in the service of the body

only discerning whatsoever

the ten or fifteen focal areas
of perception thought to be
fundamental to a single
glance; or increasing the limit
number of such areas by a
factor of one thousand, for example, the
ten thousand or fifteen
thousand perceptual facts per
glance

only area of totality

briskest of touchdowns

only whiff or bit of whiff

only evidencing of no matter what

any or all upsurge or downdroft

cleaving nodes: knitted flicker

convened as noted: only noting

realm plotter-doubs

ot ot

reinforced surmising

dimensioned belief-fragments thereof

IMAGING LANDING SITE(S)



Depending on where and how the body is positioned, there are significant shifts in horizon-level. Horizon position influences the shape and extent of the site of a person. No sooner has one set of perceptual landing sites appeared than along comes the next—often simply its double—to replace it. Most studies of vision fail to recognize the tactile and kinaesthetic components of the “view” or to take into consideration the degree to which vision is not purely visual.

“SEE THAT WOMAN OVER THERE—SHE’S NOT THAT MORTAL.” HOW CAN THIS BE MADE TO BECOME A STATEMENT OF TRUTH?

always in conjunction with the body
always formed by the body
always in the service of the body

any neighbor whatsoever to discerning

the many nonfocal areas
of quasi-perception
fundamental to a single
glance as well as
the numerous nonfocal areas
of quasi-perception constituting the
sweep from one glance to another

approaching totality

briskest filling in of gaps

around whiff

mock evidence

that which accompanies any upsurge or downdroft

the rest of the flickering

all the duly additionally noted convened between

daubs of self-visitation

more of the same and . . .

ubiquitously surmised reinforcing

surfaced beliefs

ARCHITECTURAL LANDING SITE(S)

always in conjunction with the body

always formed by the body

always in the service of the body

instant assessments of position, location, and dimension

relative corners

facial widths

cut distances

judgments of extent of

rough hewing of where

spot checks

of what blacks and limits

Originally intended to point out the extent to which *a viewer's body forms a part of the view*, Ernst Mach's classic rendering of a room according to the left eye also suggests, through the viewer's composure as it is revealed in the small part of the body apparent in the view, the extent to which *view forms viewer* (see facing page). Responding to familiar surroundings, notably an ordinary wooden floor demanding only the most routine of traversals, the viewer rests comfortably with feet propped up. Were he confronted with a less straightforward surface, for example, one in which the terrain made him wonder whether he could cross the room, his pose would probably be a more apprehensive one. Always in the wings are alternative landing site configurations, ready to serve as replacements at a moment's notice. It may be that configurations of landing sites of any type happen by means of imaging landing sites.

Every glance, always part of a sequence of glances, is at least double and doubling



Every sequence of glances is enmeshed in a sequence of imaging that is in turn enmeshed in one of kinaesthesia

Landing Sites in Relation to Phantom Limb Formation

Each sensory modality has a perceptual component and an imaging one: that is, as per our terminology, perceptual landing sites and imaging landing sites.¹ Visual-perceptual landing sites have corresponding visual-imaging landing sites and tactile-perceptual landing sites have corresponding tactile-imaging ones. Within the perceptual array, visual-perceptual landing sites record what is actually seen, while visual-imaging landing sites sketch in or put forth how things might be seen. Tactile-perceptual landing sites serve up the immediate feel of objects, while tactile-imaging landing sites suggest (rough in) how objects might feel to the touch. Tactile-imaging landing sites register texture or near-texture in the world at large. A body-person is kinaesthetically figured, grounded, and configured by means of kinaesthetic-perceptual landing sites. Kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites confer on the world at large some of how it feels to be a kinaesthetic-proprioceptive body. Both the body-person and the world happen discontinuously through a conjoining of many, often haphazard, efforts, but both continually belie this origin and condition.

...

From the reports of numerous patients,² this report of a composite patient has been formed to suggest the tenor and range of the phantom limb phenomenon:

I am always as aware of my right arm as I am of my left arm. It has fingers; it has everything. Occasionally, the right one assumes an unusual posture that the other one never could. I also sometimes get a sharp piercing pain starting at my right elbow going down the outer edge to just above the wrist bone. The arm does at times cease to be there for a bit. At other times, rarely, but sometimes, this phantom limb stays close enough to my body, remaining well-enough coordinated with the rest, without quite succeeding in making a ligature with the shoulder; so that, positioned two or three inches apart from the shoulder, it becomes what might be thought of as a disconnect-limb.

By what defining elements is a phantom limb inserted into the world? How closely does the defining of a phantom limb parallel the defining of an intact one? What effect does the architectural surround have on the defining of a phantom limb?

Phantoms surface to fill in gaps. Modes of operation peculiar to "being a body" can be deduced from observing the dynamics of phantom limb formation. What causes some gaps in the body schema to resist being filled in by phantoms?

...

We mark the spots at which stimuli for and effects of sensory modalities (spotty perception) are positioned, naming them landing sites. Convinced

of the need to determine positioning of constituent factors of body-world interaction, we make rudimentary chartings of landing sites, hoping eventually to arrive at a more nuanced approach. Even given the greater laxity for making determinations that a blunt approach allows, how to begin to position stimuli for, and effects of, some sensory modalities (that is, oral and olfactory) remains baffling. But the more that can be determined about where, at each instant, what is in play is in play, the better one's chances for surmising what has an effect on what.

...

Initially, it is simply a matter of taking appearances literally, designating the cup at the far end of the table, or perhaps only the cup's handle, or a bit of its rim, to be a member of the group of occurrent visual-perceptual landing sites. Landing sites never appear singly, and it is always hard to know how extensive they are—that is, they resist being pinned down as to scale. They exist within the perceptual array simultaneously on several different scales at once. The size of a landing site is proportional to the magnitude of the effort expended to form it. Greater and lesser efforts may be made from moment to moment in regard to the same area to be focused on; and no two regions within the perceptual array receive simultaneously the same degree of emphasis or have the same magnitude of effort expended in their regard.

...

Immediately after an accident, the phantom may be dissociated from the real body.

Amputees are convinced that even free-floating phantoms belong to them.

...

What makes it possible for the discontinuous to be read as continuous, or what lends continuity to that which is discontinuous? What hides the gaps or smooths them over? Imaging landing sites fill in gaps. But kinaesthetic-perceptual landing sites can also bridge gaps. Sensory modalities underpin one another and provide continuity for one another.

Even in cases in which a phantom limb is felt to dangle in the air several inches below the stump, unconnected to the leg, it can be experienced as part of the body and as moving appropriately with the other limb and with the torso.

A gap across which the body can still recompose itself and continue to function—how is such a gap possible? If a phantom limb exists to fill in gaps, why would an invoked one fail to fully fill in its designated site?

...

Unquestionably, phantom limbs are predominantly kinaesthetically defined. That a patient believes a phantom leg several inches apart from his body to be part of it argues against imaging being the primary means

through which a phantom limb receives kinaesthetic defining, for the logic of imaging would seem to dictate that images be formed as wholes. A more likely explanation of the phantom disconnect-limb phenomenon would be that nerves kinaesthetically active prior to amputation continue to be so, with the resulting gap merely an indication of nerve damage somewhere within the neural network. Under this explanation, kinaesthetic-perceptual landing sites are indeed active in defining a phantom limb, for any landing site that has been triggered to occur within the body, and that therefore can be said to have a bodily component, counts as a perceptual landing site.

In any event, phantom limbs, like regular limbs, far from being monolithically composed, consist of assembled segments (thigh, knee, toe). Each part and each element of a part is constituted on its own basis. In other words, what constitutes the phantomness of a phantom limb varies throughout its length.

Intact limbs may include nearly as great a degree of discontinuity as phantom disconnect-limbs do, only not noticeably so. Despite their basis in physical fact, kinaesthetic impulses that are projected onto a phantom appendage from nerves within the body (and here the word "projected" provides a clue) may be only borderline perceptual landing sites, belonging as much to the imaging camp as to the perceptual one. It may be that quasi-perceptual landing sites of this sort preempt the role of imaging landing sites and simply run the show, with theirs being the only conferrable "reality." All evidence suggests that, in general, when it comes to a conferring of "reality," perceptual components take precedence over imaging ones.

Despite kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites having obviously not rushed in to fill in the gap, which strongly suggests kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites not to be active in this case, a sparse group of landing sites of this type may nonetheless persist within the gaping gap and be instrumental in a propelling along of the action.

Is there no rhyme or reason to kinaesthetic habitation at some distance from the body? The preceding discussion suggests there is. We believe that kinaesthetic spillover happens routinely and that the body, through imaging, lends to all it perceives a modicum of kinaesthetic endowment.

...

How a body-person is positioned within an architectural surround influences how she thinks and feels. A body-person forms out differently, depending on the circumstances to which she is obliged to respond. The body lives reciprocally with its surroundings. The degree to which the body and its surroundings are implicated in one another remains a puzzle. For determining what is in effect within this reciprocal relation, we use architecture to construct "new givens," situations that make landing site configurations more readily trackable.

...

An eight-year-old boy born with paralyzed legs and a right arm that ends at the elbow states that when he fits his elbow into a small cup so as to manipulate a lever that allows him to move his wheelchair, phantom fin-

gers, "like everyone else's fingers," emerge from his elbow and grasp the edges of the cup.

Not only do these phantom fingers lack, as do phantom appendages in general, visual-perceptual landing sites, they seem, given how bizarrely they are positioned, to be missing visual-imaging landing sites as well.

The phantom fingers at the elbow would appear to be based on kinaesthetic events, evoked by a tactile occurrence. These kinaesthetic events, or the kinaesthetic landing sites defining the phantom fingers, are surely not perceptual in nature, for they are not the result of preexisting nerve triggering but are instead on-the-spot, instantaneous responses to a need—that is, they are the product of imaging. In the course of perceiving the world, all perceivers invariably imbue all they encounter with traces of their own kinaesthetic coloration. Because kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites are largely what animate and fill or form so-called "space," we also refer to them as atmospheric-kinaesthetic landing sites. Seeing how essential they are to the child in his desperate evoking of fingers helps us to remove the doubt as to whether kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites (atmospheric-kinaesthetic landing sites) are operative within phantom limb formation. It is likely that phantom fingers brought into existence by atmospheric-kinaesthetic landing sites (kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites) deliver up only a sense of projected-out "fingerness" rather than a full-fledged hand with coordinated fingers.

At the moment of inserting his elbow stump into the cup, the child could well make use of fingers with which to grab hold of the lever. It is not as though he is unfamiliar with the kinaesthetic-proprioceptive feeling of fingers, for the left arm provides this. The wheelchair cannot be moved unless the stump touches the lever. There must be tactile-perceptual landing sites between lever and stump. At the same time that the child touches the lever with his stump to propel the chair, the logic of tactility prevents him from interposing between stump and desired fingers the necessary and appropriate forearm and hand. The logic of his action forces him to make a deformed, illogical image or construction.

...

If proprioceptive landing sites had an imaging component, the child's phantom fingers would not have been assigned so odd a position. That proprioceptive landing sites lack imaging counterparts suggests that they may not be out-and-out perceptual landing sites, at least not independently. For simplicity's sake, we have tended to link them with kinaesthetic-perceptual landing sites; however, kinaesthetic-perceptual landing sites frequently occur apart from proprioceptive ones—not all movements within muscle tissue record or give position. An object as pictured or held in place by perceptual landing sites (direct perception) with the assistance of imaging landing sites has a distinct position for the one perceiving it. Architectural landing sites mark relative location and exact position. An architectural landing site is probably a hybrid—in part a perceptual and in part an imaging landing site. Architectural landing sites allow a person to register swiftly how and where things are positioned or to make snap judgments of location, dimension, and orien-

tation. Architectural landing sites record the bounds and shapes of immediate surroundings. The quickest way to get a sense of how architectural landing sites function is to think of what happens when they are missing or insufficiently arrayed. Everyone has had the experience of feeling like an idiot when stubbing her toe. The necessary architectural landing sites were not in place.

We may eventually decide to classify architectural landing sites as proprioceptive.

...

Vision is not only visual. Visual-perceptual landing sites usually have both tactile-imaging landing sites and kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites associated with them. Seen objects (visual-perceptual landing sites) are viewed as having particular textures (tactile-imaging landing sites) and the seeing, inasmuch as it is part of a world, must also be associated with, we propose, some degree of atmospheric kinaesthesia (kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites). Furthermore, since the one who sees subsists, to some extent, within what she sees, all types of landing sites can be said to be active within vision.

...

In these preliminary charts, our first attempts at positioning landing sites, we present the world-at-large not as kinaesthetically neutral, but instead as harboring kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites, projected by perceivers who do not separate architectural surrounds from the kinaesthetic context and feel of their own sensoria.

...

In cases in which the nerve leading to a limb is severed, but the arm is not amputated, the resulting phantom occupies the now useless true arm and is usually coordinated with it; but if the victim's eyes are closed, the phantom will remain in its original position when the real arm is moved by someone else.

With eyes closed, the patient, having no inkling that a change has occurred, maintains that his limb is positioned as he last saw it; "seeing" the arm as it last was happens by means of a set of visual-imaging landing sites that take over positions abandoned by the set of visual-perceptual landing sites that was in place only seconds before.

Receiving no orders countermanding how it was positioned when the patient's eyes were open, the overall configuration of kinaesthetic-perceptual landing sites defining the phantom stays put and, in effect, continues to defer to the visual, to what the patient remembers to have been the demands of the visual.

With the patient being none the wiser for it, one type of perceptual landing site (kinaesthetic) has effectively supplanted another (visual) or taken up its cause.

Were the patient asked to open his eyes right after he had reached out to touch his arm, would the phantom limb and the arm immediately reunite, or would it be a gradual process? Would the patient be able to give a description of what he had perceived during the period of separation?

...

Instead of blocking out or merely replacing the phantom limb, an artificial limb ends up augmenting it; the phantom grows stronger and more palpable within the prosthesis into which it slips as a hand does into a glove.

Prosthetic limbs, being visible, have visual-perceptual landing sites in place. Having, at least in those cases in which nerve damage in the stump is minimal, a degree of tactility by virtue of a single tactilely responsive area, they also have tactile-perceptual landing sites. Phantom limbs, available neither to sight nor to touch, and so with neither visual-perceptual nor tactile-perceptual landing sites in place, rely for perceptual definition on kinaesthetic-perceptual landing sites. They subsist as kinaesthetic habitations of thin air. When the prosthetic limb and the phantom are joined, all three primary types of perceptual landing sites (visual, tactile, kinaesthetic) become available to the combined limb. Although the tactility of



CHART OF VISUAL, TACTILE, KINAESTHETIC AND AURAL LANDING SITES ONLY

When the fingers are snapped, an aural landing site comes into existence via a particular conjunction of tactile landing sites.

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| kinaesthetic-perceptual landing site | tactile-perceptual landing site | visual-perceptual landing site | indeterminate area or non-landing site |
| kinaesthetic-imaging landing site | tactile-imaging landing site | visual-imaging landing site | aural-perceptual landing site |



CHART OF VISUAL, TACTILE, AND KINAESTHETIC LANDING SITES ONLY

Upon being asked to touch his arm, the patient with closed eyes, although deprived of the main sensory channel (visual-perceptual landing sites) open to him for registering the real arm's position, continues to maintain contact with the real arm through his sense of touch (tactile-perceptual landing sites); a minimal amount of tactile contact suffices to keep the combined prosthetic and phantom limbs working as a unit (c).

 kinaesthetic-perceptual landing site	 tactile-perceptual landing site	 visual-perceptual landing site	 indeterminate area or non-landing site
 kinaesthetic-imaging landing site	 tactile-imaging landing site	 visual-imaging landing site	

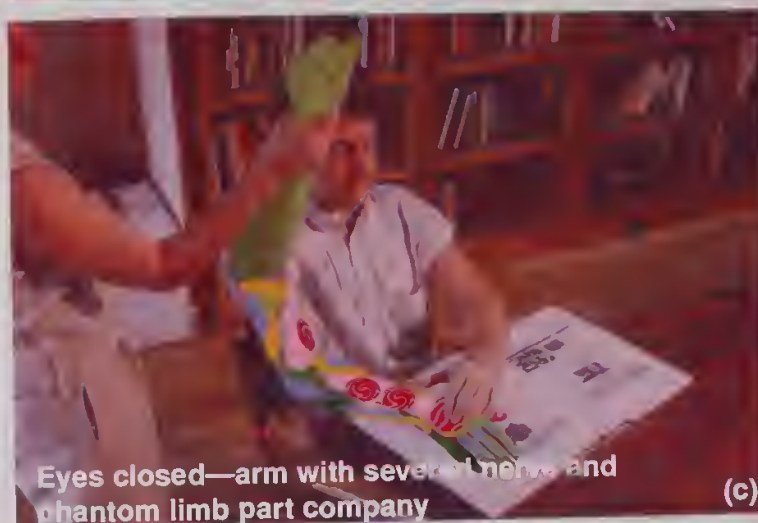









CHART OF VISUAL, TACTILE, AND KINAESTHETIC LANDING SITES ONLY

Upon being asked to touch his arm, the patient with closed eyes, deprived of the only sensory channel (visual-perceptual landing sites) open to him for registering the real arm's position, reaches for the phantom limb, which conserves the position of the real arm as last viewed (c).

 kinaesthetic-perceptual landing site
 kinaesthetic-imaging landing site

 tactile-perceptual landing site
 tactile-imaging landing site

 visual-perceptual landing site
 visual-imaging landing site

 indeterminate area or non-landing site



ARCHITECTURAL LANDING SITES

One finds how one's body is situated in the world through contrasting positionings of focal areas of perceptual awareness. Dashed lines show approximations of distances and dimensions, architectural landing sites.

■ kinaesthetic-perceptual landing site	■ tactile-perceptual landing site	■ visual-perceptual landing site	■ indeterminate area or non-landing site
■ kinaesthetic-imaging landing site	■ tactile-imaging landing site	■ visual-imaging landing site	

the combined limb ranges only over a single local section (the one active in the prosthetic alone), this is enough to keep the two qualitatively different limb components combined when the limb is moved unbeknownst to the patient whose eyes are closed. Tactile-imaging landing sites, and presumably kinaesthetic-imaging landing sites as well, are of a different character depending upon whether the prosthetic device has been fashioned out of metal, wood, or plastic. Or, when a phantom combines with a useless true arm, tactile-imaging landing sites, taking their cue from the intact arm, emulate flesh. That the phantom hangs in there with the prosthetic limb as it moves along when the patient's eyes are closed suggests the degree to which architectural landing sites are in play within a phantom limb. One way to test for architectural landing sites might be to ask the

patient whose eyes are closed to imagine his limb being lowered in a series of small increments and to listen to how he characterizes each of the moves.

...

It should not be surprising that phantom limbs appear; rather, it would be more surprising if they did not. The body has in all only seven or eight (depending on whether head and neck are taken as one) major articulated sections (legs, arms, torso, pelvic region, head/neck) and thirty or so minor ones (fingers, toes, eyes, eyelids, lips, tongue, and genitals). These sections—which, of course, subsume transient subsections resulting from microactions—generate all bodily movement. Each major section figures prominently within the body schema, the kinaesthetic-proprioceptive

...

• • •







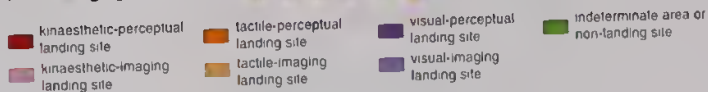
• • •

1. For further explanation of landing sites, see generally Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny* (London: Academy Editions, 1994); as well as Arakawa and Gins, "Landing Sites/The Book of Settlements," *Art & Design Magazine* 8, nos. 5-6 (May-June 1993), p. 50.

3 The term "deafferent" derives from Jonathan Cole and Jacques Paillard, "Living without Touch and Peripheral Information about Body Position and Movement: Studies with Deafferented Subjects," in José Luis Bermúdez, Anthony Marcel, and Naomi Eilan, eds., *The Body and the Self* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 245–66.

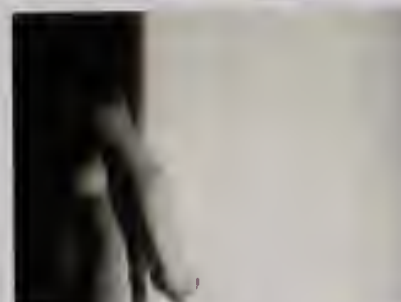


As the result of a viral infection, I W lost sensations of touch and muscular proprioception from the collarline down. Constant visual vigilance is required for any purposeful movement. The patient reports that this vigilance requires intense concentration and intellectual effort. When I W first sat up in bed, he was so overwhelmed by this achievement that he stopped thinking about sitting and immediately collapsed. Once he had learned to walk, if he sneezed, and thus disrupted his mental concentration, he would fall over.

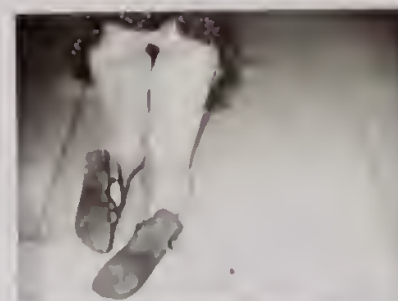
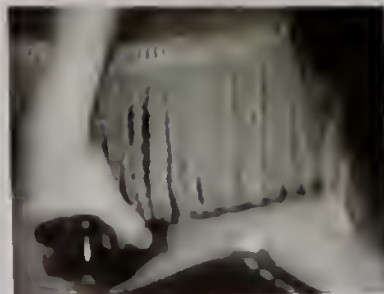
tactile-imaging landing sites (     ).

FILMS

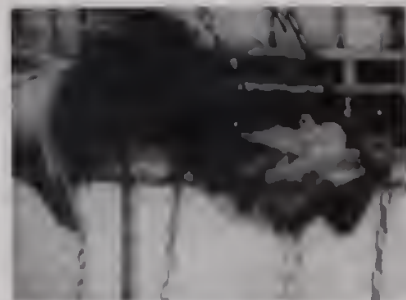
**WHY NOT
(A SERENADE OF
ESCHATOLOGICAL
ECOLOGY)**



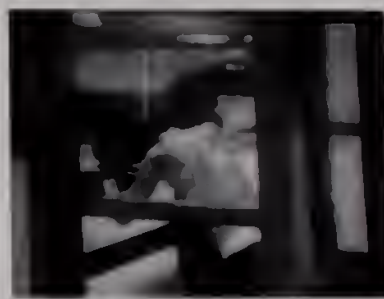
Six sequences of film frames from
**Why Not (A Serenade of
Eschatological Ecology)** 1969
16 mm, black and-white sound,
110 minutes, featuring Mary Window



FOR EXAMPLE
(A CRITIQUE OF
NEVER)



Six sequences of film frames from
**For Example (A Critique
of Never)**, 1971
16 mm, black-and-white, sound,
95 minutes, featuring Jonathan Leeds



ARCHITECTURAL BODY

human beings are born into architecture and
are from then on conditioned by it

the body as architecturally motivated

replaces mind—"what's on your mind?" can be
more accurately posed as "what's up with your
architectural body?"

dispersed but reunifiable consciousness or
extended, far-flung, and reworkable bodiness

the body inextricably linked with
architectural surrounds that are
activated by it and that activate it

multiply initiated bodily articulation



above
Architectural Surround/Ubiquitous Site Study 1985-97

*Ubiquitous Site X, a mixed-media work by Arakawa and Gins from 1985, is featured
in this study and in those on pp 170-77*

*The architectural surround which in this case varies in size with the amount of energy
expended at last approximates the body-proper in size, the ubiquitous site has, in
effect, been reeled in*

pages 170-71
Outposts/Landing Sites of the Architectural Body no. 1 1993-97

pages 172-73
Outposts/Landing Sites of the Architectural Body no. 2 1993-97

pages 174-75
Outposts/Landing Sites of the Architectural Body no. 3 1993-97

pages 176-77
Outposts/Landing Sites of the Architectural Body no. 4 1993-97

pages 178-85, 187
Architecturally Induced Effusions Studies 1996-97

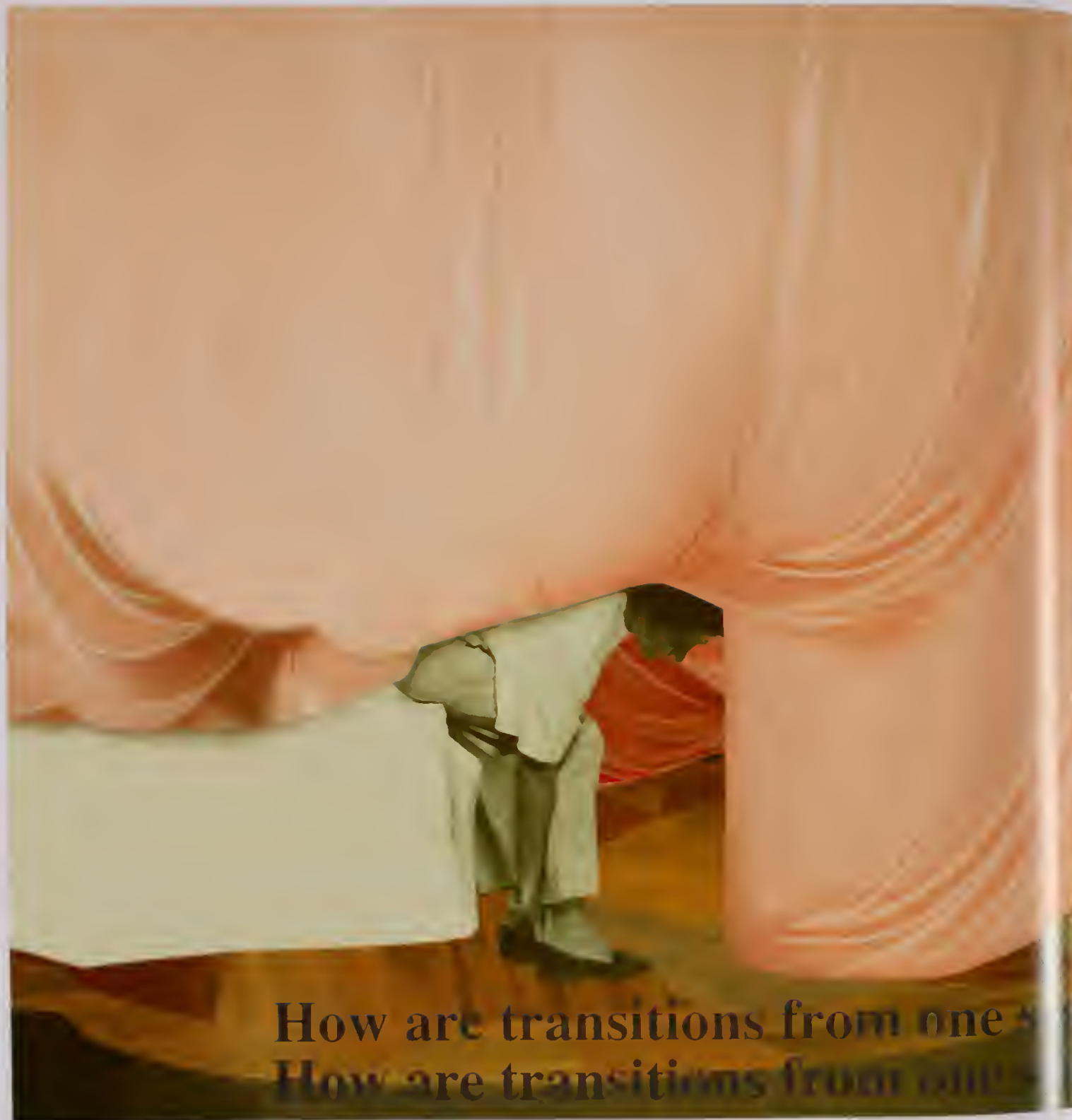


What flows between one part of the atmosphere and another to instigate articulation?



To what extent does how the body holds itself in relation to the architectural surround correspond with what is thought and felt?





How are transitions from one
How are transitions from one



of action to another effected?
of articulation to another effected?



An architectural body articulates across how many different scales of action at once?













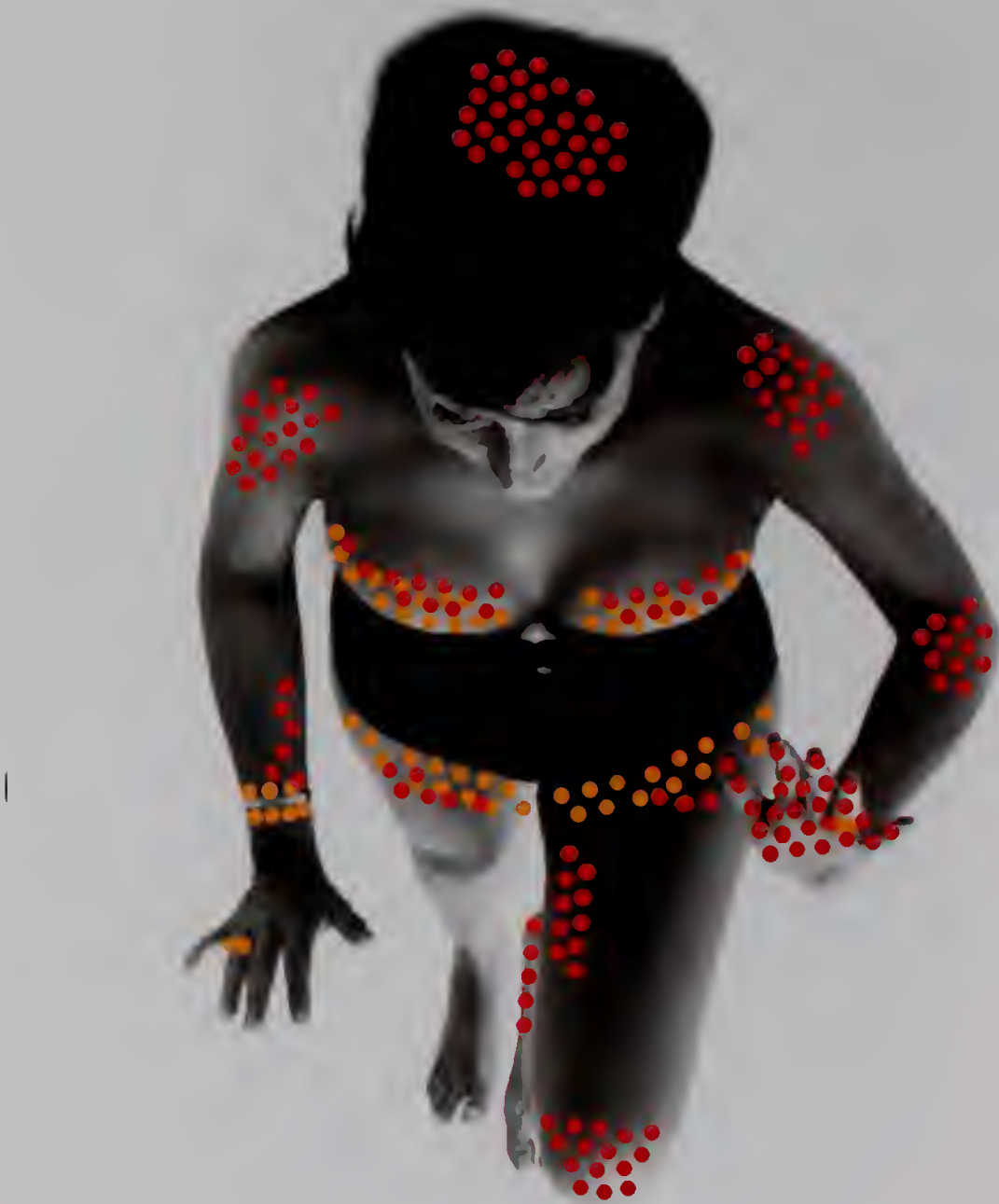


TACTILE-PERCEPTUAL AND KINAESTHETIC-PERCEPTUAL LANDING SITES

TACTILE — ORANGE

KINAESTHETIC — RED





articulating conceptual nets capable of striving

forebackground, near, foreforeground, path, foremiddleground, middleforeground, blockage, middlemiddleground, near, middlebackground, part, backforeground, merging, backmiddleground, splitting, backbackground, enabling, foreforeground, periphery, foreforemiddleground, surface, foreforebackground, object, foremiddlebackground, process, foremiddleforeground, superimposed, foremiddlemiddleground, contact, forebackforeground, forebackmiddleground, balance, forebackbackground, counterforce, middleforeforeground, full, middleforemiddleground, middleforebackground, empty, middlebackforeground, middlebackmiddleground, path, middlebackbackground, backforeforeground, far, backforemiddleground, backforebackground, attracting, forebackground, far, foreforeground, path, foremiddleground, middleforeground, blockage, middlemiddleground, far, middlebackground, part, backforeground, merging, backmiddleground, splitting, backbackground, enabling, foreforeground, periphery, foreforemiddleground, surface, foreforebackground, object, foremiddlebackground, process, foremiddleforeground, superimposed, foremiddlemiddleground, contact, forebackforeground, forebackmiddleground, balance, forebackbackground, counterforce, middleforeforeground, full, middleforemiddleground, middleforebackground, empty, middlebackforeground, middlebackmiddleground, path, middlebackbackground, backforeforeground, near, backforemiddleground, backforebackground, attracting

to use articulated surrounds to recast the architectural body





UBIQUITOUS SITE • NAGI'S RYOANJI • ARCHITECTURAL BODY

To be prepared for events of one billion years from now,
enter here.



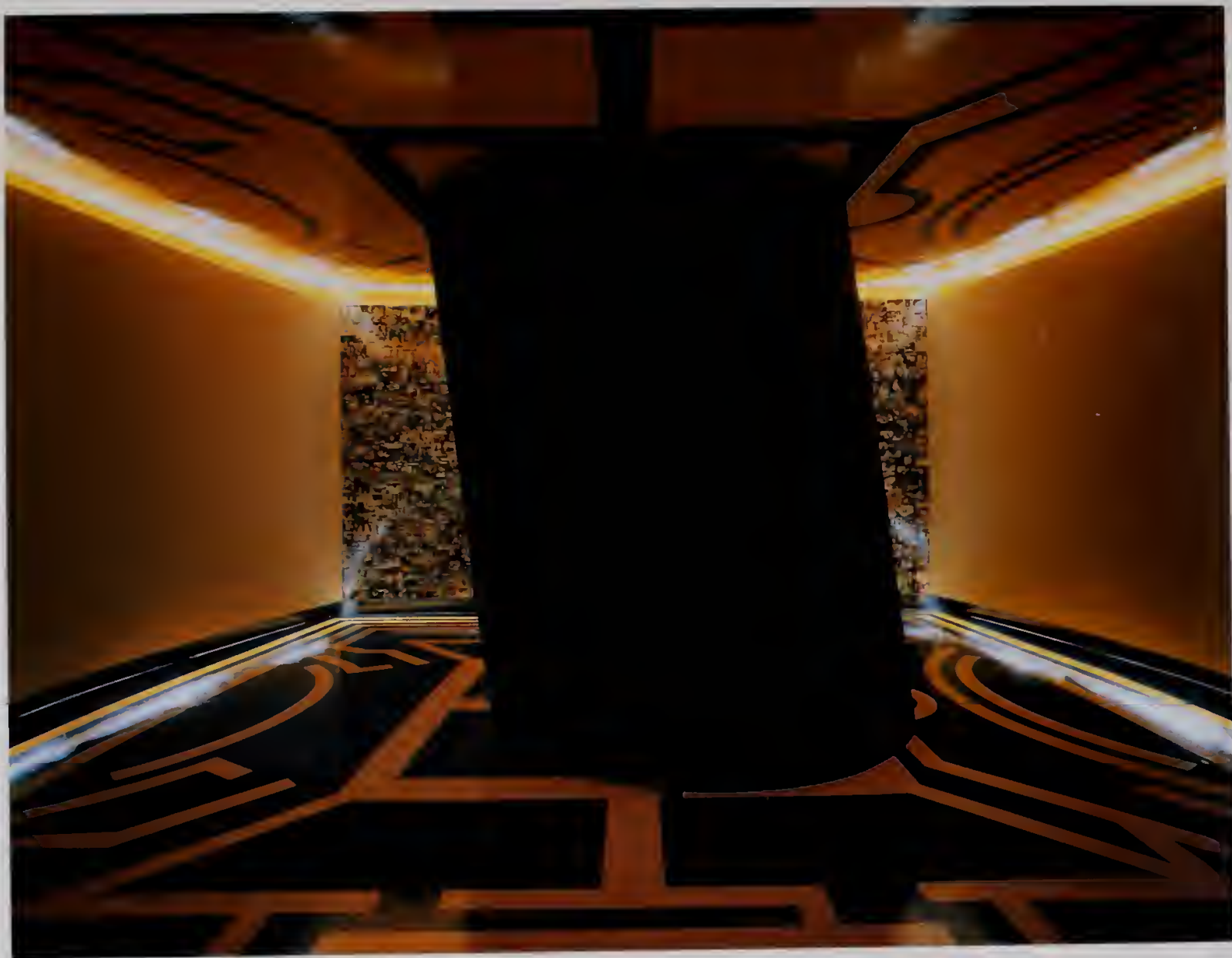
View of Nagi Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan
The cylindrical building (center) contains Ubiquitous Site • Nagi's Ryoanji • Architectural Body, which fills an interior space measuring 70 feet in length and 30 feet in diameter

The first of Arakawa and Madeline Gins's large-scale architectural surrounds,
Ubiquitous Site • Nagi's Ryoanji • Architectural Body constitutes one third of the
Nagi Museum of Contemporary Art, whose main architect is Arata Isozaki

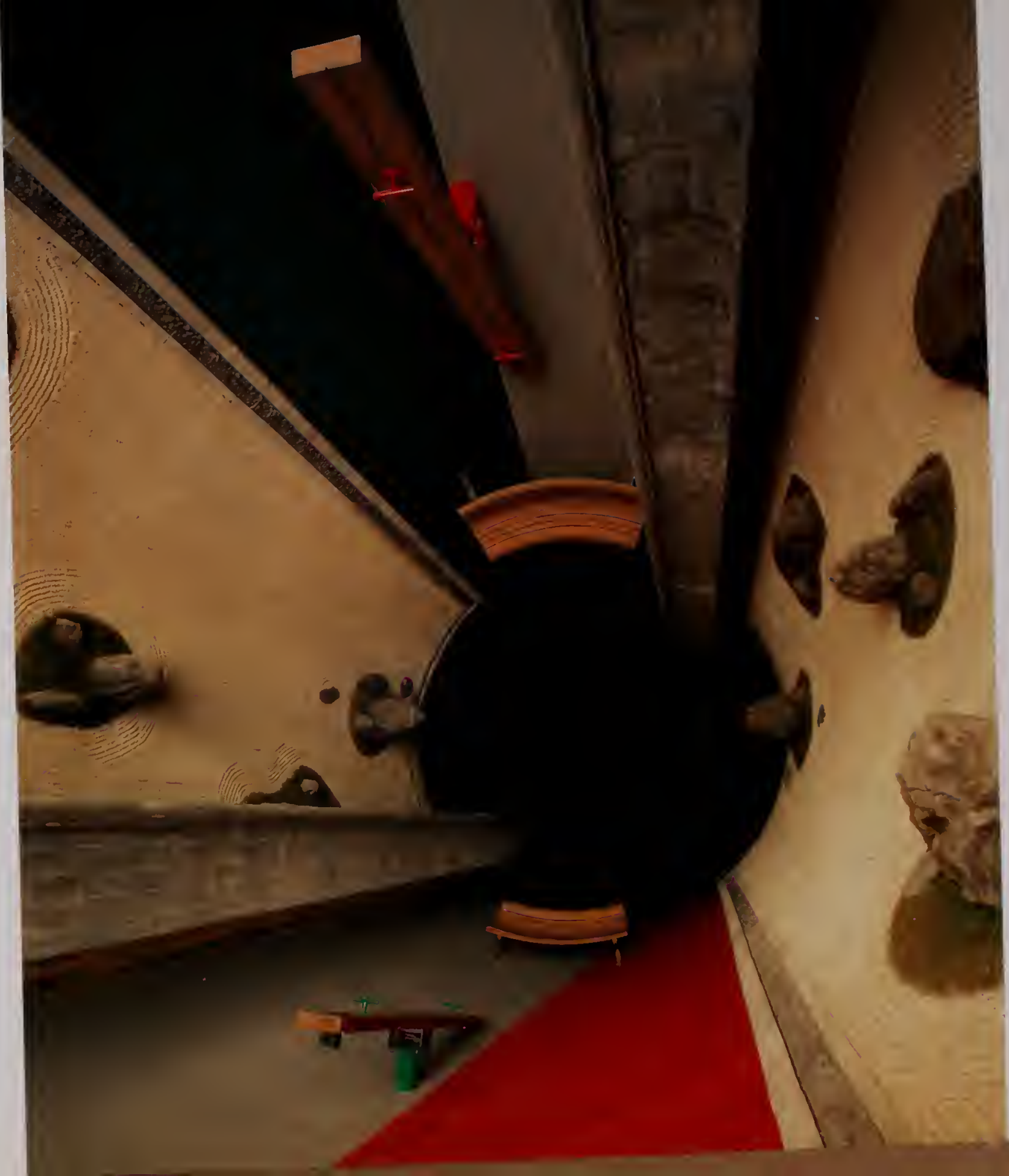
"Beginning," "past," "future," "I," "me," and "you" are all words that have no place in this process. They are superfluous.

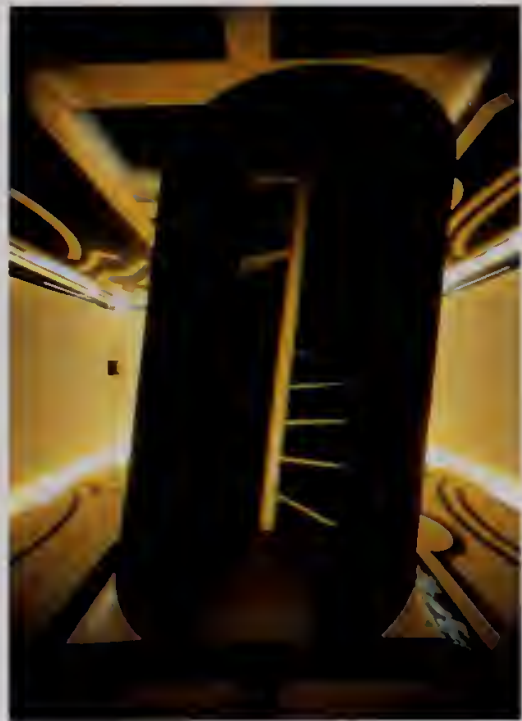
As if magnetized, the body, moving in a veering, unbalanced balance, loses all sense of identity, or casts the little that remains of its identity as a person, outside itself. The person who entered the cylinder on her own volition ceases now to be the initiator of her own actions. There is no single initiator of actions to be found. Symmetry should be able to supplant identity, and sure enough, it can and does do this. In compliance with the objects and juxtapositions that prompt them to exist, perceptual, imaging, and architectural landing sites have been symmetrically aligned; they now initiate actions and instigate events. If the body proper loses its bearings within this symmetrically organized container, it is up to all the landing sites arrayed throughout the entire interior of the cylinder plus the visitor's body proper, functioning palpably in combination as an "architectural body," to institute a new set of bearings. This is also how things go in the normal course of events, although generally the number and diversity of the initiating sites involved in each action stand unrevealed.

Eternity is an ancient and foolish dream or construction. Learning how not to die is, of course, an entirely different matter. Step into *Ubiquitous Site • Nagi's Ryoanji • Architectural Body* to learn how not to die.



Requiring their section of the Nagi Museum of Contemporary Art to admit entry from below, Arakawa and Gins designed a subterranean antechamber that leads from the rest of the museum into Ubiquitous Site•Nagi's Ryoanji•Architectural Body. Labyrinth patterns are painted on the curved floor and ceiling of the antechamber, and photographs of the residents of Nagi line its back wall. Visitors ascend to the architectural surround through a spiral staircase.







Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro,
Gifu Prefecture, Japan, 1993-95

Sites of Reversible Destiny

RADOVAN IVSIC
AND ANNIE LE BRUN

Within Arakawa and Madeline Gins's *Site of Reversible Destiny–Yoro*, 1993–95, what immemorial wheel, what enigmatic sphere, what paradoxical fire operates obscurely to surprise and amaze us, filling us with a feeling of the never before seen? Surely, we have here the total opposite of today's repetitive and tiresome painting. This is because painting is no longer at issue here and nor, appearances to the contrary, is architecture. Simply, what is at issue are the concerns of the body, its vertigo, the thirst for other horizons; or, as Arakawa and Gins put it, at issue are new "landing sites."

No, it is no longer a question here of painting, be it traditional, monochromatic, hyperrealistic, conceptual, poor, minimal, abstract, and so on. It is no longer a question of architecture, functional or not, if only because hardly any resemblance remains between these floors, ceilings, or sidewalks, and the usual ones. Sites of reversible destiny can be spoken of as philosophical gardens, improbable spaces, or interrogative constructions. One surprise in particular among many is that there is not a single horizontal surface, inside or out, to be found in *Site of Reversible Destiny–Yoro* or in any reversible destiny construction. It appears as though Arakawa and Gins want a countering of all perspective to serve as the basis of their project that concerns our bodies, our lives, our destiny.

In effect, many different levels and changes of terrain await us, ready to surprise us, destabilize us, throw us off balance, transport us outside ourselves. And this is but one of the many strong sets of initiatives that define this ambitious project, dreamed up to snatch us from the squared-off and flattened-out carpentered world. However, if you let yourself vegetate as a phantom, the body forgotten, feelings anesthetized or sclerotized, making no effort to forestall a lazy and comfortable slide toward the tomb, then your life, your destiny, is irreversible, and you have little in common with Arakawa and Gins, who are interested in precisely the opposite, namely, in reversible destiny, that is, in nondestroyed or nondespoiled life.

It ought not, therefore, to be astonishing that Arakawa and Gins give their all to force you to become unhinged or repeatedly tripped up and have you stumble, putting you ever before, in one way or another, a

"stumbling block"—the Greek name of which, *skandalon*, contains the same root as the word "scandal." Scandal, of course, causes a loss of equilibrium. To provoke the loss of equilibrium is to incite scandalous behavior. This is why, at the heart of every site of reversible destiny, there is endless scandal.

How not to think of the garden of the castle of Gianfrancesco Vicino Orsini in Bomarzo? This great Italian nobleman, around 1560, modified the landscape from top to bottom, scandalously enacting the transformation during the night by torchlight. To be sure, this extraordinary garden, with its enormous stone sculptures (elephants carrying a castle, double-tailed mermaids, giant tortoises), bears not the slightest resemblance to the *Site of Reversible Destiny–Yoro*; nonetheless it might supply an essential key or two to it. No photograph of the Orsini garden in Bomarzo can communicate what a visitor to the site strongly experiences. We think above all of the house of heavy, chiseled stones that rises obliquely at an angle of thirty degrees and that can be entered. It is there that, as one struggles mightily to maintain one's balance when moving across its incredibly uneven surfaces, one experiences the stupefying force of gravity in a way that striding across a flat surface could never bring about. The enormous disorientation that ensues comes partly from the tremendous physical effort that one must expend merely to retain some stability or to rescue oneself from a possible fall. Perhaps there, more than in any other place, it is possible to grasp what Arakawa and Gins had in mind when they wrote, "Always try to be more body and less person."¹ This remarkable leaning house of Bomarzo reveals the density of the body as much as it demonstrates the terrible ineluctability of gravity.

And, given the fact that this leaning house of Bomarzo has been in the process of falling and precipitating falling for more than four hundred years, it is hard to grasp exactly what is afoot in Arakawa and Gins's wanting to hear nothing of the past. And, in keeping with this, might they also wish not to speak of the future—we are led to believe that they put little trust in the present—to the point that they even ask themselves what the present would be for someone tumbling toward the ground after having jumped off the Empire State Building.²

Are they trying—they who seek principally to free us from sociohistorical snares that hold our sensations hostage—to say to us, after André Breton, that “history falls *outdoors* like snow”?³ Or is it that, perhaps without quite knowing it, they are seeking to have their project of extending beyond the bounds of horizontality be set up as a kind of counter-Babel? And, as with the radical critique of vertical madness that constructs itself around the Tower of Babel, do they do this as much to defy the physical dimension always at work in language as to present a defiant challenge to gravity’s physical reality?

Sites of reversible destiny are formidable machines against abstraction and against the forms that, paradoxically, people try to give abstraction by erecting their pretensions toward eternity as architecture. None of all this silliness for Arakawa and Gins, for whom the body, before being conceived, must first be perceived, and perceived as opening—outside the categories of space and time—the infinite labyrinth of our sensations.

And it is there (in the infinite labyrinth of our sensations) that everything combines with everything else, disunites, and recombines into a knot. Transparent? Opaque? Invisible, there is always and ever gravity, mutual attraction, the universal attraction of all that exists. We rarely think about it, all the more so as these days we no longer run the risk of having apples fall on our heads, as in Newton’s time. Albert Einstein brought curved space into the picture to explain—invisible and omnipresent—this gravitational force that is even more astonishing than light. Have you ever thought of how stupefying it is that, in the universe, all things mutually attract each other? There are double stars that orbit around each other—as if the center of one celestial body attracted the other body’s center, as if each star had a heart. Also, there are the moon and tides, and there are unimaginable black holes that attract rays of light, cause them to deviate from their trajectories, and absorb them. There are magnets (*aimants*), sometimes minuscule, that violently attract iron in their environs. There are also lovers (*amants*), irresistibly attracted

to each other, moving in their double *ronde*, one around the other. And there is, as well, Dante and the enigma with which *The Divine Comedy* ends: “*l’amor che move il sole e l’altre stelle.*”

But is this “love that moves the sun and the other stars” to be found within sites of reversible destiny? Have Arakawa and Gins anything to say about love, or eroticism? Do not judge by appearances. For who, without having read *Green Box*, 1934, by Marcel Duchamp, Arakawa and Gins’s friend, would have understood that Duchamp’s *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)*, 1915–23, stands as one of the most serious meditations on love? And who, even with this text in hand, understands that *The Large Glass* is but a continuation of the tradition of courtly love? For their part, Arakawa and Gins are so intent on making us feel unstable, throwing us off balance, and making us trip over our own bodies so that, consciously or not, they seem not to take the amorous dimension into account. However, as they are involved with the body—which has become the exception today despite appearances—eroticism cannot be absent. In this sense, their immense merit may lie in having systematically deserted circuits, known or not, of erotic specialization. In any case, have they not, above all, the certitude that the unsettling landing sites of their project are going to be the source of hitherto inconceivable upheavals?

Surely, it is up to us to verify this by going to see *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro* for ourselves. As at Bomarzo, where the gravitational force stood revealed a century before Newton formulated the laws of universal attraction, the site in Gifu Prefecture could very well contain enormous potential finds, the importance of which we will be able to assess only many years hence.

One reason this project is so compelling is that it resists analysis, not only because some elements of its newness cannot quite be discerned by pre-





facing page
Construction view of **Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro**,
Gifu Prefecture, Japan, 1993–95

above
View of terrace, theater, and leaning house, castle of Gianfrancesco Vicino Orsini,
ca. 1560, Bomorzo, Italy

Elliptical Field, Site of
Reversible Destiny—Yoro
Gifu Prefecture, Japan, 1993–95



sent-day consciousness, but also because a basic constituent of its novelty may be a resistance to analysis. It is as if, for Arakawa and Gins, analysis were a kind of intellectual floor that they find to be no less detestable than flat ground.

In evidence, moreover, is a persistent obscurity that serves Arakawa and Gins, we believe, as a bulwark against everything that might divert them from their deliberately blind quest, in order to let the road invent itself under their own footsteps even as they would have it be placed under ours. This persistent obscurity also guarantees the shifting structure of a project that grows richer and transforms itself almost every day, and in which what one takes to be essential becomes subordinate, or possibly vanishes altogether.

That is why one ought not to linger for too long over the term “reversible destiny,” which has, in any event, from the start signaled what Arakawa and Gins seek to have happen. For them, the term reversible destiny neither implies nor announces the possibility that time might be reversible. What interests them is that one can reverse one’s course, one can turn the page, one can . . . More than anything else they want to make us see or, rather, to put it in our power to experience, the strange liberty of palindromes: for example, the strange freedom to go either way when reading a phrase, equally well from right to left and from left to

right, as in this Latin palindrome that encircles a sun on an old Italian mosaic and that speaks of stars, fire, movement, and even causes them to move within us in just the way the words describe them doing:

EN GIRO TORTE SOL CICLOS ET ROTOR IGNE⁴

Without a doubt, time’s irreversibility strikes us as so cruel, so unbearable, so hopeless that any proffered reversibility seems a move toward freedom. But nothing is any longer clear, and the only certitude with which to ally oneself is the one that insists that it is best to hold onto no certitude whatsoever. And this is one of the senses, too, in which the term reversible destiny should be taken. Yes, all things attract one another and gravity is a redoubtable cosmic force. Yes, Arakawa and Gins do all they can to make us conscious of our bodies. What remains is that in spite of universal attraction, the universe is constantly expanding and growing inexorably colder. And then? Follow, they say, at the same time two, three arrows that move in opposite directions. This is not possible? No—but it is reversible.

The *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, which is neither a game nor a garden, is delimited in space by the image of games and gardens. The fairly high wall encircling it makes it a hidden space without its being one;



Exactitude Ridge, Site of
Reversible Destiny—Yoro
Gifu Prefecture, Japan, 1993–95

makes it a subterranean world, although that is not what it is. Is the wall there for our protection? There is no way to protect oneself from gravity, as one cannot protect oneself from the expanding of the universe or from the cooling that accompanies this expansion. Yet thanks to its surrounding walls, *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro* seems to retain warmth: Yes, the warmth of that which forms itself, undoes form, and then reassembles. The warmth of reversibility, which recreates the world by deploying its multiplicity along ever new sensations. On it, all form depends, because it is it, the warmth of liberty, that makes ephemeral ramparts surge with form that can stand up against the nothingness from which we come and toward which we go.

Garden of the Self, Trajectory Membrane Gate, Geographical Ghost, Imaging Navel:⁵ here are spaces, here are breaches, here is liberty as it takes form, to signal the place where form changes prior to forever disappearing as much on the exterior as in the interior of our bodies. Whether we like it or not, it is always to the body that we return, as to the central flame of our freedom.

This century—with one disaster after another, from Auschwitz to Hiroshima—has made us forget the body, but in a grand gesture, the Arakawa and Gins project gives it back to us, and it does this not simply

by showing it to us, but by making us feel it, at the farthest possible remove from any of the usual artistic seductions, in the foam of full certitude, on the crest of the wave of doubt, but ever at *Exactitude Ridge*.

Translated, from the French, by Lory Frankel.

This essay is a revision of an earlier essay published in Japanese as "En Goro Torte Sol Ciclos et Rotor Igne," *Gendai Shiso/Revue de la pensée d'aujourd'hui* (Tokyo) 24, no. 10 (August 1996), pp. 23–26.

1. Arakawa and Madeline Gins, "Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro: Directions for Use," in *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro* Arakawa + Madeline Gins, *Architectural Experiments* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1995), p. 13
2. Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *Architecture Sites of Reversible Destiny* (London: Academy Editions, 1994), p. 18.
3. André Breton, *Point du jour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1934), p. 81
4. "I am the sun, I am this wheel driven by fire, whose torsion makes the spheres turn" (translated from the Latin by André Pézard).
5. These place names refer to architectural structures at *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*.

SITE OF REVERSIBLE DESTINY—YORO



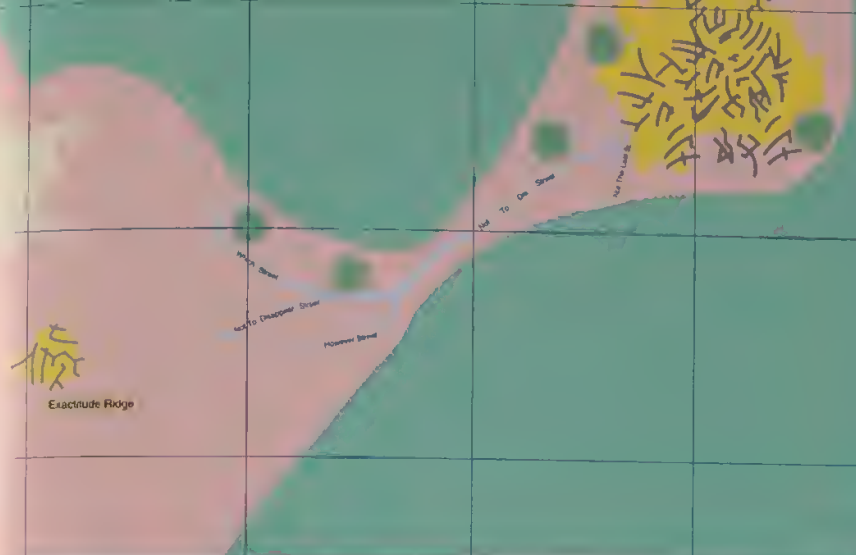
Elliptical Field, Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro Gilu Prefecture Japan, 1993-95



SITE OF REVERSIBLE DESTINY YORO PARK, GIFU

- Mound
- Depression
- Herb Garden
- Cement
- Slate
- Surrounding Wall, Slopes
- Architectural Fragment
- Architectural Fragment (underground)

0 5 10 15 20 meters



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Tread Street	3D-4D	The One After Next Street	7D-7E
Unnamed Street	3C-2C	Unused Street	7D
Within Zero Street	3C-3D	Vacant Street	6D
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Noticed Street	3E-3F	Past Endurance Avenue	6D-7D
Quick Reference Street	3F	Perhaps Fragrant Street	7C
Traversed Anticipation Street	3E-3F	Toe to Head Avenue	6C-7C-7D
Tremulous Immediate Vicinity Ave	3F-4F	Tumble Street	6D
REVERSIBLE DESTINY REDOUBLED EFFORT ZONE		PERSON REGION	
Anir Cemetery Street	4E	Blameless Street	7B
Be Street	5D	Explicit Street	6C-7C
Beg For Your Life Street	5E-6E	Gist Street	6B
Endless Courage Street	4D	Hesitant Street	7B
Escape Route	3E	Id and Ego Street	7B
Eternal Return Boulevard	5D-5E	Implicit Street	6B-6C
Fight For Your Life Street	5D-4D-4E	Inadvertance Street	6B-7B
For As Long As You Like Street	3E-4E	Indistinct Street	7B
Forever Street	4D-4E	Inleired Street	7C
Forever Regrouping Street	4C-4D	Irony Street	7B
Reversing Street	5D-6D	Lapse Street	6B-7B
Sell-salvage Street	5D-6D	Nonetheless Tumble Street	7B-6B-6C
Slay Street	4E	Of Course Street	7B-7C
SCALE ADJUSTMENT ZONE		Pause Street	7C
Brownian Motion Street	4F-5F	Release Lane	6B-7B
Centimeters Boulevard	4F-5F	Try Street	6B-7B
Gad-ily Street	5E	Where Did I Put It Street	6B-7B
Lightyear Street	5E-5F	LANDING SITE PROCESSING ZONE	
Mammoth Street	5F	Anticipatory Flickening Street	6A-6B
Neutrinno Access Lane	5E-4E-4F	Array Street	5B
VOICE PLAZA		At Street	6B
ALL HERE AND THERE VILLAGE		Diffuse Receding Boulevard	6B
AREA BETWEEN ELLIPTICAL BOWL AND CRITICAL RESEMBLANCE HOUSE		Focused Street	6B
ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS		Holding Dimensions Street	5C-6C
CRITICAL RESEMBLANCE HOUSE		Impressionable Stretching Boulevard	5A-5B
EXACTITUDE RIDGE		Lacuna Street	5B
GEOGRAPHICAL GHOST		Leap Street	5C-6C
IMAGING NAVAL		Piecing Together Street	5B
KINAESTHETIC PATH		Precise Street	5B-6B
MONO NO AWARE TRANSFORMER		Prolapse Approaching Street	5C
NEUTRALIZED AND NEUTRALIZING DELTA		Sifted Convergences Street	5B
PERSON AS WORLD SUFFUSION ZONE		Specified Lane	5B-6B
REVERSIBLE DESTINY REDOUBLED EFFORT ZONE		Vaporous Chip Lane	6B-6C
SCALE ADJUSTMENT ZONE		Wide Dispersal Street	5B-6B

INITIAL DIRECTIONS FOR USE (TO BE CONTINUED)

THE CRITICAL RESEMBLANCE HOUSE

Enter the house several times, each time through a different entranceway. If thrown off-balance when entering the house, call out your name or, if you prefer, someone else's. Strive to find a marked resemblance between yourself and the house. If by chance you fail to do so, proceed even so, as if the house were your identical twin. Move through the house as though you were presently living in it or as though you were its next resident. Should an unexpected event occur, freeze in place for as long as you see fit. Then adopt a more suitable (inasmuch as it is more thought out) position for an additional twenty seconds or so.

A perceptual landing site: any discerning of any event whatsoever.

An imaging landing site: any filling in of the gaps between/among perceptual landing sites.

An architectural landing site: any registering of dimension or position.

Try to incorporate two or more horizons into every view.

Use each set of furniture as a concrete reference for the other sets.

Search out identical moments in segments of the house that are remote from one another. Attempt this initially with strikingly similar configurations and eventually with widely divergent ones.

THE ELLIPTICAL FIELD

Instead of being fearful of losing your balance, look forward to it (as a desirable reordering of the landing sites, formerly known as the senses).

When moving through the *Elliptical Field*, remember as many views of the *Critical Resemblance House* as possible, and vice versa.

Try to draw the sky down into the bowl of the field.

Use each of the five Japans to locate or to compose where you are.

Always question where you are in relation to visible and invisible chants of islands known as Japan.

To secure a sense of yourself as this site (the entire elliptical field):

Vary the rate at which you move through it.

Associate each of the extreme forms your body is forced to assume in traversing it with both a nearby and a distant form.

If accidentally thrown completely off-balance, try to note the number, and also the type and the placement, of the landing sites essential to reconstituting a world.

Frequently swing around to look behind you.

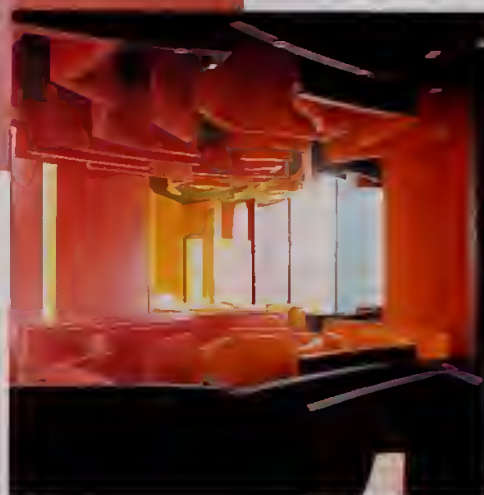
Minimize the number of focal areas (perceptual landing sites) at any given moment.

If an area on a landing site catches your eye and attracts your interest to the same degree as the area through which you are actually moving, take it up on the spot, pursuing it as best you can as a parallel zone of activity.

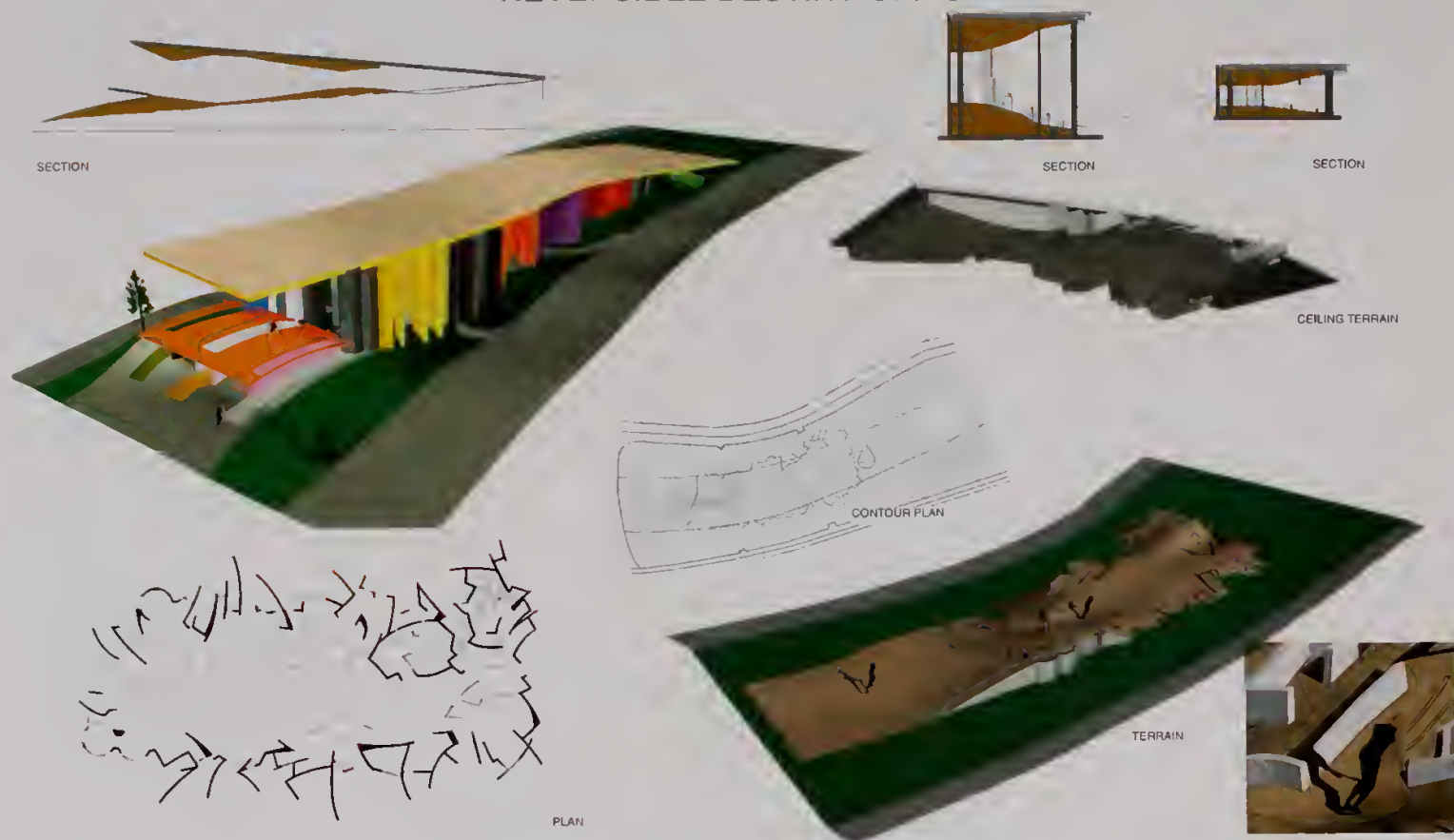
Make use of the *Exactitude Ridge* to register each measured sequence of events that makes up the distance. Within the *Zone of the Clearest Confusion*, always try to be more body and less person. To make a decision or to become more subtle or more daring, or both, in regard to previous decisions, use the *Mono no Aware Transformer*. Inside the *Geographical Ghost* renege on all geographically related pledges of allegiance. Wander through the ruin known as the *Destiny House* as the *Landing Site Depot* as though you were an extraterrestrial. Move in slow, measured steps through the *Cleaving Hall* and, with each arm at a distinctly different height, hold both arms out in front of you as sleepwalkers purportedly do. Close your eyes when moving through and around the *Trajectory Membrane Gate*. In and about the *Kinaesthetic Pass*, repeat every action two or three times, once in slow motion. Walk backward in and near the *Imaging Navel*.



above and facing page
 Exterior and interior views of **Reversible Destiny Office**,
Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro, 1994–96



REVERSIBLE DESTINY OFFICE



A structure is formed out of its own gradual rise up off the ground. The vanishing point at the building's rear remains visible from the front entrance despite a near total condition of blockage. Terrain predominates over plan. The terrain frequently takes the lead in the complex conversation it carries on with the body. A room making a reappearance will have an oppositely pitched terrain. Along the entire length of the structure, the ceiling and the terrain work as a matched pair. A combination of painted lines, walls of varying heights, and walls-become-furniture delineate three occurrences of a labyrinth that lacks a center. Lengths of walls suspended from the ceiling terrain do not correspond with the heights of those walls of the terrain with which they are aligned. Some walls will be able to be entered. A reception area exhibits the same features as the garden it faces. It need be, it will be possible to enter the men's room before entering it. Each of the seven rooms has a carry-over into it of some of what characterizes one or more of the other rooms. Natural light falls bizarrely in random patches of light. As well as from the ceiling terrain, lighting will be from furniture, from the terrain itself, and from below the terrain. Who walks here will be cloaked in echoes.

Proposal board for **Reversible Destiny Office, Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro** 1994-96



Critical Resemblances House, Site of Reversible Destiny—Yara
1993-95



**Critical Resemblances House, Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro, Gifu Prefecture,
Japan, 1993-95**

Out of Balance

BERNHARD WALDENFELS

FREE FALL

The Arakawa and Madeline Gins book *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny* opens with a thought experiment that puts the reader in a delicate situation. We are invited to imagine a body falling from a ledge of New York City's Empire State Building, "with no terrain for a safe landing in view." Further, we are urged to participate in this dangerous event by entering the "hurtling body." Now the question arises: "Who or what would the body *be* then?" The answer given is that the body has no time to spare "for constituting itself a who." Nothing is left except landing sites, "registered as part of a self-registering process." The identity of who or what reappears only after one has recovered one's balance, because "identity would stop events in their paths." Finally, the reader is asked "to step out of the falling body before it hits the ground." The fatal moment is kept in suspense, but it comes near enough to affect one's sense of self and to prevent one from being completely balanced. "*It is desirable to keep the body in a state of imbalance for as long as possible. The actions, the range of actions, possible to the body for righting itself and regaining its balance will both define and reveal the body's essential nature.*"¹

By recovering our bodily balance, we come to a new state. For, as Kant stated, human beings are unbalanced beings "as if standing on the borderline of an abyss," confronted with an "infinity" of desiderata.²

WORLD IN EQUILIBRIUM

What does a world look like in which a kind of "free fall" might occur that is more than pure accident or incident? What does a world look like in which bodies are striving for landing sites without solid ground to stand on?

Within the Aristotelian cosmos, every movement is oriented toward an end. Even falling stones do not simply fall but tend toward the center of the earth, in proximity to which heavy bodies find their natural place. Nothing is able to fall or to crash unless it is thrown out of its path by unnatural forces. Accidents do not disturb the functioning of cosmic laws by which everybody and everything is assigned its place. Identity is connected with place-identity. In contrast, within the Galilean space, goal-oriented movements turn out to be pure motion caused by the balance of forces and counterforces. Motion takes place in a void and homogeneous space.

Strictly speaking, the free fall from the Tower of Pisa, staged by Galileo in the sixteenth century, cannot be called a fall at all because the space construed by physics and mathematics is not divided simply into up and down. Now, in the Cartesian age, human beings are split into extramundane thinking beings who contemplate and measure spatial movements, and intramundane corporal beings who are subject to being moved within natural space.

Nothing moves itself, not even the earth. But the human world, which seems to be held in equilibrium by cosmic order, or physical law, continues to be haunted by old myths. These myths tell us stories about all kinds of falls that can neither be integrated into the cosmos nor be reduced to natural processes, for example: the fall of man, represented by Adam; the soul's fall into the body, evoked by Plato; and Icarus's fall from the sky, painted by Brueghel on the threshold of the modern era. Myths of falling accompany the different orders like shadows or specters, even penetrating our dreams.

MOBILITY OF THE BODY

Phenomenologies of body and space, developed by Edmund Husserl, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Gaston Bachelard, and sustained by Gestalt psychology, introduce a bodily self-moving, a *hautokinesis* that the ancient Greeks ascribed to the soul. This self-movement can be reduced neither to the subjective consciousness of movement nor to objective movement within space. The bodily "here" and "now" marks a zero-point, located neither above nor below, neither in front nor behind, neither right nor left. On the contrary, all these differences are related to an original here from where our body movements start. This zero-point is like a pregeographic and prehistoric landmark. It cannot be inscribed onto maps and calendars because all geographical and historical dates refer to the here and now of the body. Where is here? Here is where the question arises. It is from where our movements start. Falling presupposes moving oneself. Moving oneself means neither that we are the author of our own movement nor that our movement is purely precipitated by other movements. Self-movement refers to itself through a species of kinaesthesia in which sensing and moving interpenetrate. There is no somebody or something standing behind movement, but the

self of the self-movement constitutes itself by recurrent movements and iterations, by being the same and not the same. What is identified is not identical in itself. Being here means simultaneously being elsewhere.

Phenomenologists like Husserl or Merleau-Ponty speak of a sort of pre-ego (*Vor-Ich*)—the ego being ahead of itself. Similarly, Arakawa and Gins refer to a certain “sub-who” situated below the level of identity, which is, so to speak, below itself.

LABILITY

Human corporeity is characterized by the fact that human beings not only move in different directions but also maintain a certain position, learning to walk upright. Standing, sitting, even lying presuppose a certain upright position that cannot be reversed without perverting the sense of things. The nouns *Sinn* in German and *sens* in French mean both “direction” and “sense,” and the meanings are closely related. The human face turns into a grimace when seen upside down. Doing a handstand does not mean taking a certain position among others, it rather means reversing the world, creating an upside-down world (*verkehrte Welt*), at least for a moment, as in a child’s somersault.

But apart from these special cases, the upright position leads to a general form of lability and to a range of lapses. It is only beings who are able to stand up who are able to fall down. By falling, we approach the borderline of our existence. While falling down or falling into an abyss, we undergo a sort of movement that is removed from our control and by which our body escapes from itself. It is to this extent that we can declare “I fell down,” not simply “my body fell down.”

The movement of falling is prepared for by stumbling, which reminds us of the process of stuttering in speech. Stumbling deranges self-movement so that it loses its own rhythm, hitting an obstacle and trying to catch itself and recover its balance. Limping brings us into a permanent form of imbalance due to the fact that both feet are not coordinated in reaching the ground. Limping is similar to squinting, which somewhat disconnects the vision of both eyes. Such forms of lability should not be regarded as failures. Compared to marching in step, the *Gleichschritt*, when all limbs are over-coordinated as in the collective body of marching soldiers, limping seems to be a productive form of deviation, as in the “limping spirit” (*esprit boiteux*) in Pascal’s *Pensées* or the stumbling albatross in Baudelaire’s poem “L’Albatros” from *Les Fleurs du mal*.³

Ultimately, all variations of lability are condensed in the process of hesitation. By hesitating, we test movements before performing them, seeking a landing site that does not exist in advance. Lability leads to insecurity and uncertainty. Therefore, human beings tend to overcome lability by overstabilization, looking for fixed tracks and rails.

JUMBLED ARCHITECTURE STABLE

Architecture can, among other things, be regarded as a space-constituting art. But what should we understand as space constitution? On the one hand, it does not mean fabricating things that are arranged in a preexist-

ing space container. On the other hand, spaces, places, and sites cannot be fabricated like things; *where*-questions cannot be categorized like *what*-questions. Rather, space arises when space-forming things like walls, ceilings, floors, doors, windows, staircases, and corridors are arranged in such a way that space cooriginates. A wall would be nothing more than a mass of stones and cement if it did not separate interior from exterior.

Consequently, architecture interferes with the space-opening movement of the body, which gives place and takes place and lets us live and dwell in what has been called the life-world. So, there is nothing astonishing about the interconnectedness of world, body, and architecture. These connections are already indicated by language. The façade and rear of a building either are reminiscent of or derive from the face and back of the body. On the other hand, the body reveals a certain construction, and the world is often interpreted as a great work of architecture, executed by a divine world architect. This interrelationship among body experience, world order, and works of architecture has the effect that even the last is afflicted by the question of balance. In Plato’s *Philebos*, architecture is presented as a particularly high craft because more than other crafts it makes use of arithmetic, measurement, and also weighing, called “statics” (*statikē* in Greek).⁴ Measuring instruments like straightedges and weights are the equipment of the serious architect who erects buildings on solid ground and not castles in the sky.

On entering Arakawa and Gins’s *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, 1993–95, in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, the visitor may have the impression of falling into a jumbled architecture, jumbled like a photo taken when a camera shakes. Not only the visitor’s eyes but also his or her feet lose hold. Ways turn into deviations or detours, constructions into deconstructions. But there is method in it.

KINAESTHETIC EPOCHÉ

Phenomenologists might be inclined to speak of a kinaesthetic *epochē*. Inside *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, we are not only invited to refrain from judging, but to stop walking in the usual manner, always taking terrain for granted. Common locutions such as “turning the tables,” or “coming unhinged,” are restored as images, sceneries, and space events, as if architecture were imitating the hieroglyphics of dream language. The different registers of space begin to flicker. The borderline between inside and outside blurs. Houses are turned inside out, there are entrances leading into the open air. Inside and outside become interchangeable, as in René Magritte’s painting *Le Noctambule*, 1927, in which a street lamp appears inside a room. The play with above and below transforms ceilings into floors, with chairs hanging from above like lamps. Glass floors open onto an antipodal underworld. Simple actions such as standing and walking become unbalanced by the unevenness, the obliqueness, or the slipperiness of the ground. Narrow passages force visitors to negotiate body past body, the way Japanese car drivers negotiate past each other when they meet in small single-lane streets. The plurality of bodies, each making its own way, turns into the intertwining of intercorporeity, where



Critical Resemblances House, Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro
Gifu Prefecture, Japan, 1993–95

one's own way, and the way of others, cross. The visitor ascends along a ramp that leads to an impasse so that he or she has to descend like a spiral springing back. The "forest" of identity ceases to prevent us from seeing the trees that are landing sites.

DISPLACEMENT OF EQUILIBRIUM

Where does the disturbance of equilibrium originate? Are we to be content in this matter with a simple reversal of figures, with new constructions, with a normal coming and going changing into something like "anything goes"? Or does self-movement respond to an "otherness" that stimulates our own movement and puts into question what we are looking for? Gestalt psychologists such as Wolfgang Köhler and Kurt Lewin introduced *Aufforderungscharaktere*, or *Gefordertheiten*.⁵ These "affordances," to use James J. Gibson's translation,⁶ cannot be reduced to data registered by the organism, nor to stimuli encoded and decoded with the help of neural codes. Rather, they have to be taken as appeals and claims (*Ansprüche*) to which our body responds. Included in the interplay of appeal and response is the background, which stretches into the depth and attracts our gaze. A field of experience will never be in complete balance. The monotony that reduces a melody to one sound will transform

hearing something into hearing nothing. The thought experiment of the body falling into the abyss can be understood not only as a search for "landing sites," but it can be read in another way: What occurs to us (*einfallt*), what strikes us (*auffällt*), and what happens to us (*zufällt*) precede all our explorations. "What is the case" has to do with a certain "cadence" of the body that falls in love before seeking love, that falls into difficulties before looking for solutions. We are unbalanced by what does not belong to us, and by what takes place where "I never have been" and where "I never shall be." I call that "the alien" (*das Fremde*).⁷

To the extent that our destiny as individuals or as a species originates from the alien, it cannot simply be reversed as in the case of reversible processes or procedures or in the case of exchanging one's own standpoint with that of another. Just as the way up is not simply the reverse of the way down, because the ascent and the descent are different ways of self-movement, so the way from me to the other is not simply the reversal of the way from the other to me. If we want to continue to speak of reversibility, we must admit that reversibility itself includes some aspects of irreversibility.

First, reversibility *increases*, as everybody returns from the other in different ways. Second, because nobody returns to himself or herself without



being changed, one could even say that in a certain sense he or she does not return at all. Finally, coming back to oneself is not possible without getting or being *outside* oneself. Having been born into the world and having been named by others, from the beginning everything we live and do is turned toward the outside. To some extent, we can choose how to respond to the appeal and claim of others, but we cannot choose not to respond at all. What puts and keeps us in movement *takes place*, but in a certain sense it is *out of place*. We are unable to locate from where we start moving, speaking, and acting. Therefore, the “blank” body to which Arakawa and Gins refer⁸ requires a type of architecture that preserves moments of an an-architecture and which allows for the “unbuildable,” for a “rough building” (*Rohbau*),⁹ a term with some affinity to Jean Dubuffet’s *art brut*.¹⁰

Ready-made buildings resemble mausoleums from which life is banished. Only an architecture that refuses to let the process of building disappear under what has been built can leave space for what is out of place, and for what can permanently displace the balance of the world.

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1. Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny* (London: Academy Editions, 1991), p. 18.

2. Immanuel Kant, “Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte,” in vol. 6 of Kant, *Werke*, ed. W. Weischedel (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1964), p. 89.

3. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. L. Brunschvicg (Paris: Hachette, 1950), fragment no. 80, p. 17; and Charles Baudelaire, “L’Albatros,” in *Les Fleurs du mal*, (Œuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 9.

4. Plato, *Philebos*, vol. 2 of *Platonis opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901), 55e–56e.

5. See Wolfgang Kohler, *The Place of Value in the World of Facts* (New York: Liveright, 1938); Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory as Human Science* (New York: Gardner, 1976); and Bernhard Waldenfels, *Order in the Twilight*, trans. David J. Parent (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996), pp. 137–38.

6. James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), chap. 8.

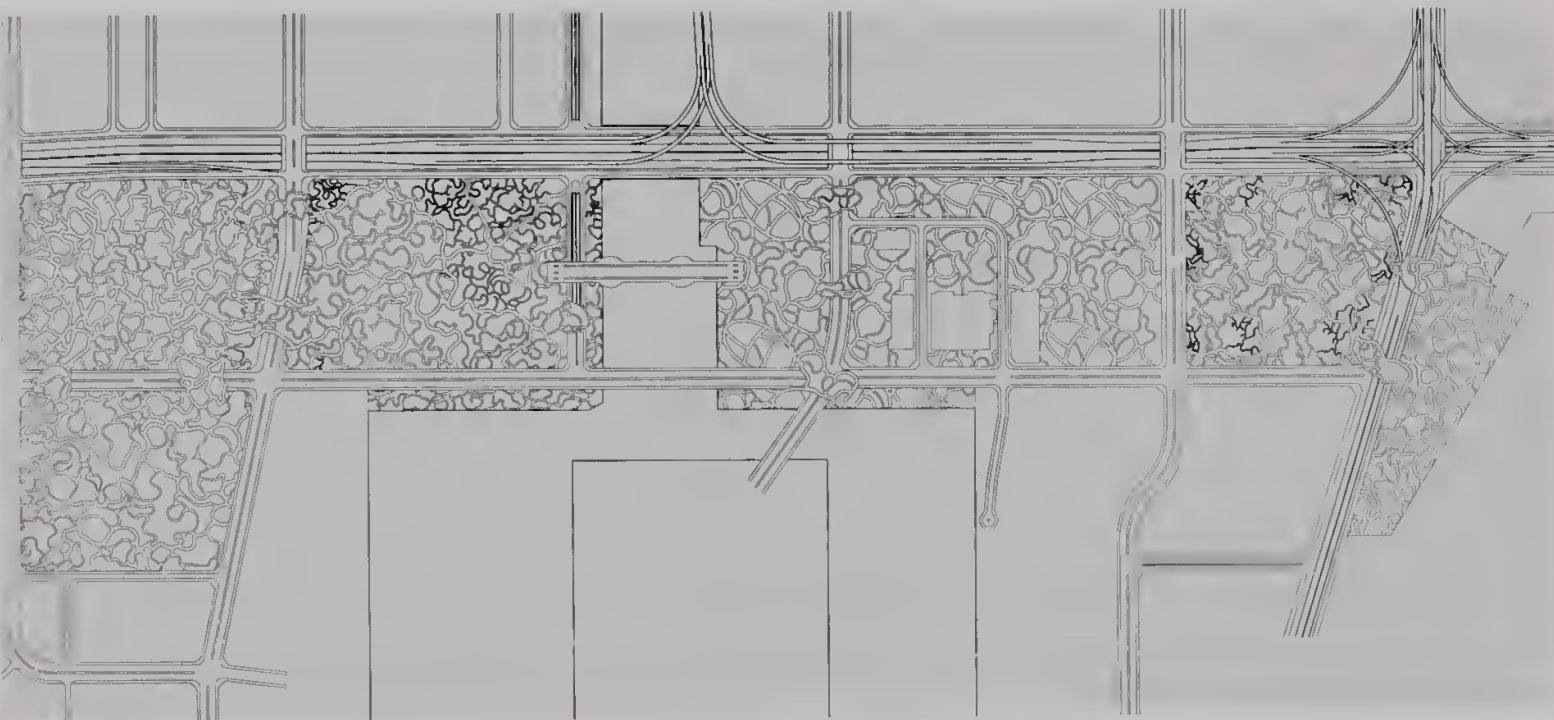
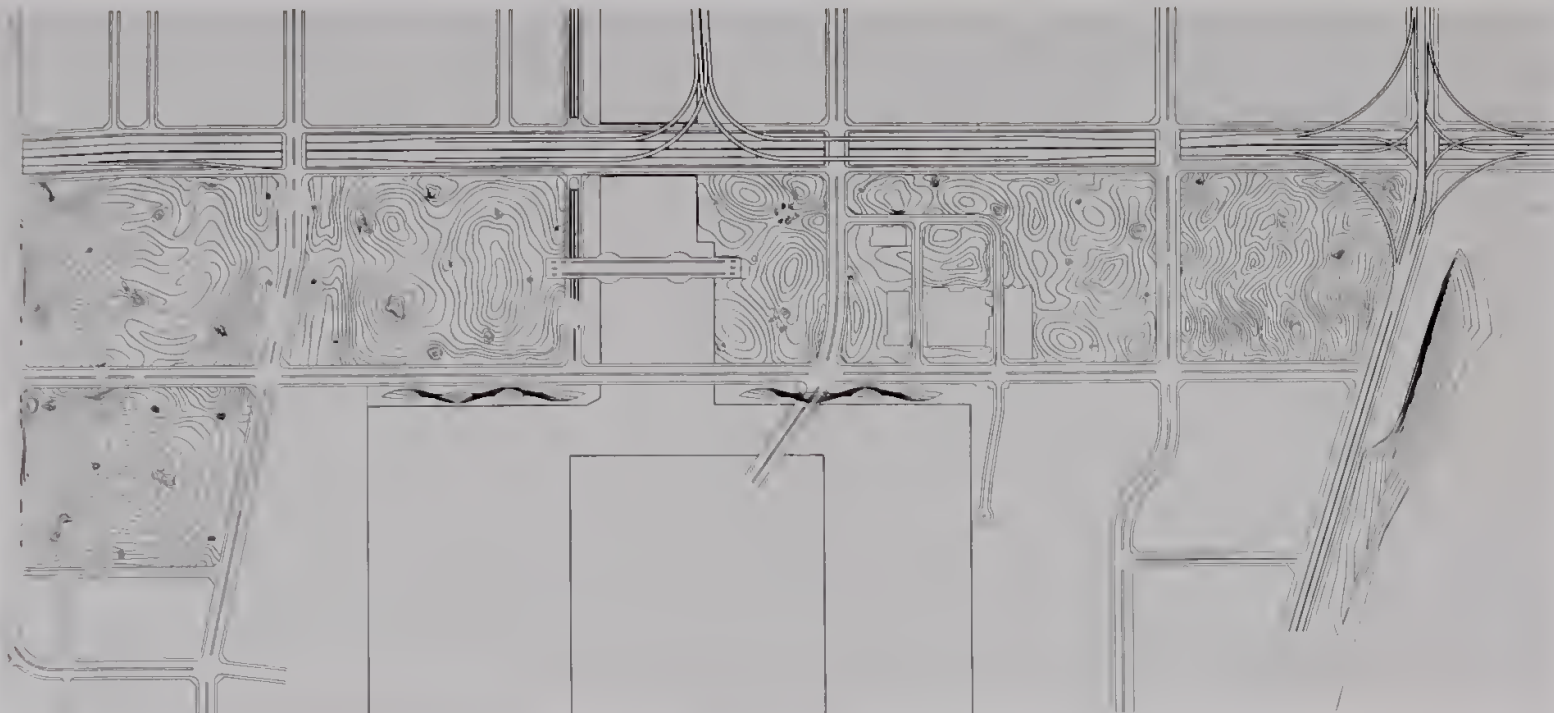
7. See Waldenfels, *Der Stachel des Fremden* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990). “Alien” means more than that which is not yet known; rather, it refers to an “accessibility of what is originally inaccessible” (in Husserl’s words), such as the other person, the other gender, the foreign language or culture, and so on. See E. Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen*, vol. 1 of *Husserliana* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1950), p. 144.

8. See Arakawa and Gins, *Pour ne pas mourir/To Not to Die*, trans. François Rosso (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1987), p. 32.

9. *Rohbau* in German means the first stage of construction, which is followed by *Ausbau* (the finishing stage); *Rohbau* also means a construction in which the bricks are left exposed. What I mean is a style of construction that presents itself not as completely finished but as open-ended.

10. *Art brut* was an expression used by Dubuffet to characterize his own style of art, which makes use of the painting of “outsiders”: mad people, children, and nonprofessional artists.

View of Elliptical Field, Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro, Gifu Prefecture, Japan, 1993–95, showing clockwise from top left: Trajectory Membrane Gate, Mene no Awore Tranformer, and Imaging Novel.



top
Terrain Study for Reversible Destiny/Sensarium City (Tokyo Bay), 1993
 Pencil on Mylar, 27 x 54 inches

bottom
Street Plan for Reversible Destiny/Sensarium City (Tokyo Bay), 1992
 Pencil on Mylar, 27 x 54 inches

Four Architects on Reversible Destiny

ED KELLER, JOHANNES KNESL,
GREG LYNN, JESSE REISER

The following texts have three sources. Six questions—generated by Arakawa and Madeline Gins with the assistance of Johannes Knesl—frame critical issues on reversible destiny architecture. Each question is paired with excerpts from answers written by Ed Keller, Knesl, Greg Lynn, and Jesse Reiser. The conversation between Keller and Knesl took place as a follow-up to the questions and answers.

The texts were selected and transcribed by Christina Yang.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

According to Arakawa and Gins, the primary purpose of life in our time should be “ta nat ta die,” with architecture being the principal taal ta achieve this. Given that historically architecture has acquiesced to resignation vis-à-vis dying, how should an architecture of learning how nat ta die address life facts, above all the acceptance of the mortal condition as a given?

JOHANNES KNESL (JK): An all-risking play against/with death, the work of Arakawa and Gins returns art to its roots, its aspiration to make new life. Most art ends up adopting a stance of resignation, of impotent defiance, or of “wise” acceptance; it makes a losing peace with death for us. Arakawa and Gins dare to deal with death in a more direct—in fact, in a *technical*—mode. Their modernist hubris is invulnerable to accommodating temptations. Instead, they go for becoming gods, better than our old gods who do not even know that they are but our desires projected. To become a god, we must first forget “language,” all those mechanisms that structure “us” vis-à-vis the “world,” and so stutter our way to divinity. [Knesl collaborated with Arakawa and Gins on *Stuttering God*, an installation exhibited at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, in September–October 1990.] The Vitruvian canon, the foundation for classical architecture, makes peace with dying by establishing the death-resisting properties of the monument that classical architecture erects: *firmitas* (tectonic firmness against decay), *commoditas* (keep a

CONVERSATION

JOHANNES KNESL (JK): If we begin with a close comparison, by using a leading architect—for instance, Steven Holl, Bernard Tschumi, Peter Eisenman, or Rem Koolhaas—and asking how Arakawa and Gins would build next to one of their buildings, I think that is a way of getting into a dialogue.

ED KELLER (EK): Well, I don’t think you can frame questions around Holl in the same way that you can around someone like Tschumi or Eisenman or Koolhaas.

JK: But take the question of procedural architecture—the notion of procedure or process fits very much into Holl because he is not so submitting to the program. He is saying, “Here is duration, a sense of time, a sense of body,” if only in a soft, Merleau-Pontian way. If you think we could do this, then shall we try?

EK: Sure. It’s a good way to start. We’ve already started.

JK: Let’s look at Eisenman. Over the last ten years or so, in my opinion, he has been pursuing what we might call “disorienting geometry.” The notion of disorientation and Arakawa and Gins’s notion of unbalancing, or throwing people off balance, is very close.

good fit going while it is still going), and *venustus* (sublime beauty vanquishes death).

Arakawa and Gins's approach is through *perceiving*, which they reconceive as a *siting* through which the body-person forms vis-à-vis his or her site. To construct less dying bodies-persons we first have to repeat artificially the way "we" are built now. An experimental art "externalizes" the mechanisms that construct "us" and makes it possible for the body-person to go into those mechanisms. The experimental situations that Arakawa and Gins design unsettle, deorganize, confront, and stop dead the natural and habituated mechanisms of siting through which the body and the world mutually provide and afford the normal, dying, body-person. If siting oneself in space-time is the process in which any form of life and of consciousness forms a "self," radical reconstructibility for us bodies-persons requires that the environment must offer a dense set of reflexively connectible and critically *other* perceptual sitings and resitings. For their experimental settings, Arakawa and Gins have moved from the the living room to the house to the city. The spatial system of the classical city maintains and enforces normalcy—especially as regards death—by establishing boundaries and categories for bodies, persons, ideas, material flows, goals, and means. If the city were to become a manifold of "ubiquitous" sitings, these categories and boundaries could not be separated out, but would become fluid and reversible. As sites interpenetrate, they would metamorphose and so make any self an other as one finds oneself resituated ever again. Architecture and the city would become an open and reversible spatiotemporal series of sitings, as prepared in Arakawa and Gins's event maps and constructed plans to be implanted into the city.

"Architectural surrounds" of the kind that promote the reversibility of human destiny will lead those who move within them to investigate the bases of their thinking, perceiving, and acting. How does the work of Arakawa and Gins initiate and support the processes of this ethical revolution?

ED KELLER (EK): For Arakawa and Gins, architecture assumes an unavoidable and definitive complicity in the structuring of a "person" as a complex assortment of devices that deflect the behaviors, beliefs, and perceptions, indeed, the totality of a subject. Within the model Arakawa and Gins employ, architecture participates in this structuring of being "human." Their work proposes an alternative practice that identifies restrictions of practical and imaginative freedom and deflects these restrictions by using specifically architectural devices. Arakawa and Gins explicitly explore ethics, and power, through architecture; their work suggests a relation between the alternative ethics they propose and the architectural tactics they develop. Their work tests two issues: (1) the ethical question and the implied condition that it could arise "naturally" from a reconceptualization of habit and repetition (in architecture); and (2) the use of specific instrumentalities architecturally and/or perceptually to organize an alternative ethics and by extension an alternative subject. The value of the work Arakawa and Gins have produced lies perhaps,

EK: I agree, but the agenda in Eisenman's work is slightly different, in that he has stated that it is incumbent upon architecture to dislocate itself as an institution. He uses the geometry not necessarily to produce a gently dislocated subject but to dislocate architecture as a frame.

JK: As a construct.

EK: As a construct, exactly. And as an institutional practice. That's a great place to start a close comparison because Arakawa and Gins are using it maybe a little bit like that although more as a direct interface to the dislocation of the subject. They invest geometry, and the disturbance of geometry, with a different set of responsibilities in terms of the body's relationship to issues of grounding, of horizon, of stability, of balance. Eisenman's work doesn't insist upon destabilizing via a disruption of balance per se, but upon a disruption of the continuity of geometry within architecture.

JK: Yes, I agree with you. He is interested in leaving a mark on the institution of architecture. The Wexner Center in Columbus, Ohio, for instance, could be a perfect example of what you brought up about horizon because there are multiple horizons implied. The horizons Eisenman introduces there are notions of horizon; he is manipulating the construct of horizon. It's much less experientially, directly visual, but it's more, in a traditional, classical way, architecture both reinforcing and contradicting an idea that already exists. There was this wall in Eisenman's Convention Center, also in Columbus, that had a grid on it that was askew, and people were throwing up. There was a direct bodily effect, but I assume he was surprised by that effect—I don't believe he would have put that there if he had expected that to happen.

EK: But at the same time, he was probably delighted, because it's a verification that architecture as an instrumentality can produce an effect to that degree. On both Eisenman's and Arakawa and Gins's parts, there's a similarity in agenda in terms of a faith in the complexification of form and program within architecture. In the Wexner Center, there's a labyrinthification of form to a certain degree, but it's a transparent labyrinth. One can locate oneself in the labyrinth—clearly, conceptually, place oneself as a subject in the labyrinth—and understand most of it, but not all of it. That's a very different kind of a labyrinthification in terms of program, space, and form than the kind Arakawa and Gins are striving for. They're more invested in extreme intensification of the labyrinth. They insist on a total dislocation of the subject. In the case of Eisenman, I don't think destabilization to that extreme is something that he's invested in. Tschumi and Koolhaas want to provide a disturbance in the programmatic continuity or the spatial continuity of the person who's navigating the work. But they want to also reestablish a continuity. For Arakawa and Gins, the role of the labyrinth has become a procedure for an almost absolute dislocation of the subject. One slips out of language, out of self, even out of

not in the essentialization of specific techniques, but in the extraction from these techniques of a general set of principles that produce and depend on a redefinition of what constitutes body and perception. Arakawa and Gins suggest that the relation between the practice of certain techniques and the emergence of an ethology may be tied together very closely; this relation operates on both the highly local scale of the individual's proprioceptive sequence (through even the smallest element in a room, the scale of the coffee cup) and the urban scale they currently extend their work to. They formally and programmatically engage fields of strong probability—within a carefully delimited sociotemporal *mise-en-scène*—that produce subjects; they intend to breed an ethological practice.

It is suggested that through this organization of transitory cessations of habit a transformative subject will emerge. In contrast to the engines of discipline identified by Michel Foucault and others, we find here a much more fluid teleology in service of a transgressive ethics. Not in service of a reintegrative strategy, either socially or on the level of the individual, but in a quest to invent new selves constantly. As they theorize the body and the subject, Arakawa and Gins project a human who does not submit to a dialectical subdivision. The inchoate no longer means “outside of language” or “unformed.” An inchoateness of the body becomes a cessation of habit—becomes a processible and developmental state.

Arakawa and Gins maintain that imbalance, life-threatening danger, and absolute chaos are needed to enable us to realize how our lives are constructed by the “architectural body” (person plus surrounds) and so to begin to reverse our destiny. How do they introduce chaos into the institution of architecture, which is dedicated to providing comfort, economy, delight, safety, and security?

JK: Radical imbalancing is the principle. Gravity, the deathful referential, is balanced by the form and strength of the structure that in standing-up induces the body-person to balance him or herself by maintaining a centered, vertical posture. The character of the body of the classical building favors specific acculturated ways of moving. Arakawa and Gins invert the founding function of the ground and turn it into a playground for the body-person to learn to balance him or herself in a dimension of life less death-bound.

When it comes to placing a “house” on the terrain, Arakawa and Gins crumple the classical floor plan that founds, generates, supports, and clarifies the meaning of the building and turn it into a labyrinth of horizontal and vertical repetitions of resembling miniconfigurations of pieces of wall that are inversions of a classical wall. In classical architecture, the wall is what creates the harmoniously proportioned room, the founding unit of classical space. With windows and surface delineations expressive of its interior projected onto it, the wall mediates as the face between what it defines as inside and outside, self and other, private and public. Arakawa and Gins’s “screen valves” undo the classical Euclidean construction of space as they reverse foreground, middle ground, and far ground, and the corresponding concepts of depth and of space as continuous.

time as one begins to become a “stuttering god” or Borgesian self-invention. And that is an important difference between Arakawa and Gins and the architects we are speaking of. I don’t think Eisenman wants us to absolutely invent ourselves, although he may hope that over a period of time it would start to take place.

JK: I agree, and I would say that Eisenman himself establishes the distance of safety in the way in which he approaches the work. He treats the labyrinth as a form but from a distance, and that distance is exactly what Arakawa and Gins are concerned with removing. Their insistence on danger, and, in a way, mortal threats, cannot be accepted by any of these architects because they are practicing architects. The idea of a close comparison is an extension of the idea of critical resemblance in Arakawa and Gins’s work. While usually repetition is used to reinforce something and make it accepted as quasi-natural, Arakawa and Gins use it to break all normal ideas and habits and force perception to start constructing us from scratch, that is, from close comparisons. They do away with any reassuring context in this move and so dislodge program and subject radically.

When Arakawa and Gins introduce the idea of the architectural body, they say that there is no outside object because the moment you look at it, it is part of you. The construction of the person involves the site. None of these architects are into this, except perhaps for Holl, who has a strong site orientation.

EK: One of the most important considerations in dealing with architecture on this level, and which I think Arakawa and Gins do, is questioning the sequencing of program. This is how we can engage the ethical question—in terms of being inchoate, in terms of madness, in terms of the absolute destabilization of the subject that we’ve been talking about. We expect that for the work that Arakawa and Gins are producing to be taken to its extreme, for it to work—in the way that they’re intending—the subject is removed from a linear perception of time. The subject is removed from language. And the subject is removed from proprioceptive sequence. So I would extend the notion of inchoateness to not only being able to represent oneself in language and time but also being able to constitute oneself as body, as perception in time. The ethical question comes into play because the destabilization of the subject that we would understand—through, say, Jacques Lacan—as a threat is not something that Arakawa and Gins are concerned with. Their work, a kind of savage practice, would generate an absolute madness, and conventional wisdom would not be willing to accept that as something reasonable. However, the savagery, or madness, that they project ties in to what someone like Norman Bryson would find coming out of the philosophers Nishitani and Nishida, in relationship to Mahayana Buddhism’s tenet of *Sunyata*. The “other” is not viewed as a hostile force. Bryson posits an ethics that would see its own constitution through potentiality, not as a violent propagation of will, but as a much more affirmative and light practice. It’s important to understand the intention not only of Arakawa and Gins but also of

At the urban scale, it is the classical city plan that first establishes an artificial floor plane to house the city. The city plan divides this plane into organic and harmonic parts that form and represent the body of urbanized “deathful” society. Arakawa and Gins’s experimental city inverts this order into a disorganizing terrain of displacedly repeating volumes, rolling waves, and fractured floor planes. The terrain is erratically explored by repeated labyrinthine paths that cut into repeated resemblances of compounds made up of fragmentary configurations of wall fragments. Thus, labyrinthification also underlies Arakawa and Gins’s method of generating larger-scale spaces. The apparent comfort of repetition lures perception into a labyrinth that inverts and reverses the mechanisms that construct life back to their originary desire to live forever. An increasingly larger-scale “unorder” builds from repeating, in ever wider circles, the labyrinthification that takes place at smaller scales.

When used to generate space at the scale of the city, Arakawa and Gins’s method of doubling is even more unsettling. This doubling rattles the (dubious and short-lived) comfort of recurrences and the sense of being. The self-closing and self-repeating spatial form of the classical city is designed to provide the (ultimately deadly) comfort of a great seemingly undying sameness that can cover over the big discontinuity—the death of the person. Experimental doubling leaves behind the complacent anthropocentrism invested in the organic division of the city. It sets up an order that opens up spatiality in the extreme by keeping open an ongoing two-way movement between miniterritorializings and a great deterritorialization. And, finally, doubling is also the basis for the attempt to rebuild ourselves radically. We have to leave ourselves first. To this end, Arakawa and Gins propose to build a twin of “us.” The sites they produce become our twins into which we can transfer ourselves.

GREG LYNN (GL): The issue of danger and destabilization in *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro* is a red herring. That site is only dangerous when you stop, cut off your motor balance, and contemplate stasis. It is only at this moment that you are in serious danger of losing your balance. Projects such as these imply a virtual mobility within a gradiated field of multiple locations and pathways rather than fixed points (despite the ruse of littering the park with default locations for “repose”). It is not derogatory to acknowledge that the cultures that feel at home in such a space are the motion cultures of skateboarding, rollerblading, and other forms of gliding. These are not extreme sports, but instead, as with the flaneur’s motion perception, they are practices of balance in motion. Balance is the sixth sense that is neglected, repressed, or radically violated by architects. Balance, when aligned with motion, sets up a complex series of temporal relationships with space that require an alternative mapping and forming of architectural and urban space. The architecture of the slope should be understood as topologically different from the architecture of the diagonal.

Many architects are fond of invoking Laurie Anderson’s often cited proverb about walking: walking is simply falling down to the earth one step at a time. Grounding, or the fact that buildings stand upright to resist

people like Tschumi through this kind of lens. The dislocation of the subject that we normally would consider “hostile”—when we think of a terrain that’s so difficult to navigate that people who visit *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro*, 1993–95, actually fall down and break their legs, for example—becomes something different when it’s viewed through this alternative lens. I’m not suggesting that we should break people’s legs, but coming from the perspective of a mountain climber, I’ve climbed and broken my leg. It didn’t stop me from climbing again. Arakawa’s response to questions about the park is that people ski, they break their legs, so why should we keep people out of the park?

JK: This notion of inchoateness has a modernist ancestry in the idea of the tabula rasa, but it also can be traced to Eastern thinking. You don’t have to produce a crazy environment to dislocate yourself. You can do this by just shifting something a little bit. In a Buddhist monastery, a wall ornament moved about a half an inch to the left produces that dislocation. Soft and gentle dislocation of the subject combined with other ways, other means of preparing for dislocation, will do the trick. You don’t have to produce canted floors to get that.

EK: I don’t know if I would go so far as saying that Koolhaas’s agenda is one of gentle dislocation, although to me it seems closer to that than the agenda of someone like Tschumi does. The way that Koolhaas organizes form is much more banal, and the way he handles the program then becomes the device that is used to produce dislocation. The basic destabilization of the body will not and cannot take place unless it’s in conjunction with issues of program and proprioceptive sequence in combination with other modes of perception such as enunciated modalities. There’s a tripartite model that has to be developed, one part of which is a labyrinthification or dislocation of form, one of which is a reorganization of program, and one of which is an enunciative sequence. Unless all three—form, programmatic sequence, and enunciative sequence—are engaged, we cannot produce a radical ethics.

JK: When you say enunciative sequence, do you mean language?

EK: I would say language, or fields, that depend on the interpretive. Form can engage by directly manipulating the body. Enunciative sequences demand attention or interpretation to a certain degree. And programmatic sequences take one through a montage of program. Through the organization of transitory cessations of habit, in other words, transitory or temporary dislocations, a reconfigured, inchoate subject would emerge. The cessation of habit is a perceptual state. The cessation of habit, critically used, leads to engagement in the production and living of what Spinoza called “active affections.” When I deal with these enunciated sequences in *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro* by mapping and identifying all the moments in which a Benjaminian absentmindedness comes into play, I can pinpoint the moment in which that absentmindedness can

falling, is one of the most basic, and banal, assumptions that architects have elevated to the status of truth. Arakawa and Gins, having discovered architecture as a new, fertile frontier for experimentation—rather than the arid plain that those within the discipline have made it—find gravity to be a source of alternative inspiration. Gravity has been conceptualized, for at least the last two thousand years, as the truth, or the culprit, that can keep buildings standing firm. Arakawa and Gins challenge this idea with novel aspects for an architecture whose balance and stability are more precarious or more dynamic. The habit of assuming that questions of gravity were answered definitively by Newton involves an acceptance of an equilibrium between a body, a building, and the earth. It is the equilibrium between these masses that initiates gravitational attraction; yet, for the last several centuries, architecture has positioned itself as a flat-earth society on issues of grounding. Where architectural space is predominantly thought of in terms of a horizontal datum, there is presently the possibility for architects to think of the ground as a topology. Although, this, as it turns out, is a very radical idea when turned into constructed architecture, Arakawa and Gins have been able to use this topological approach quite freely.

The primary generative force for architecture can no longer be the formal or the functional but must become the procedural. The procedural moves alongside, over, and under the practical, the utilitarian, and the strategic. How should “procedural architecture” be built into the ever more tightly value-engineered programs of architecture to generate the conduct that will reverse destiny?

GL: In urbanism and architecture, there is a return to themes of floating weightlessly within a matrix of furnishings in an ungrounded environment. These themes of zero-gravity environments, with zero-energy sources of power, point to a millennial desire to invent new forms of gravitational freedom and to treat the domestic interior as a terrain that has all the wildness associated with a natural landscape. Arakawa and Gins’s interest in new techniques of grounding associates them with issues of support, shelter, and spatial construction that are not easily identified as either architecture, landscape design, or urbanism. New forms of grounding and balance, other than the upright and vertical, are systematically treated as crackpot or utopian because architecture is understood, after all, as a conservative discipline that should be content with the Newtonian model of gravity to which it has adhered with unflinching dedication. It is exactly architecture’s relationship to statics and structure that guarantees its conservatism toward four walls and a floor.

EK: Cessation of habit critically deployed, Arakawa and Gins propose, leads to humans constantly engaged in the production, the living, of Spinozist “active affections.” My inclination is to ascribe to this condition the term “savage”—a savage practice. A savage architecture could encompass the consideration of not just form, but program, social positioning,

be dislocated. The question of ethics then becomes clear. Architecture, when considered in this larger framework, can initiate an ethical revolution, if that ethical revolution is considered from the Spinozist viewpoint in which active affections become a goal. It also is tied into the notion of reconfigured subjects, taking them out of habit, relocating them in a wider field, and allowing them to make a choice for themselves to develop critical wills.

In Koolhaas’s Kunsthall project in Rotterdam, do you think close comparison is created by virtue of his work itself calling to mind the field of architecture in general? Instead of “building” another museum alongside his for comparison, do we already carry a sense of architecture within us that constantly is set into a condition of close comparison by his building?

JK: Many architects would respond to this question by saying, “This is not a normal building; a building usually has a front and back.” Koolhaas doesn’t reinforce all the ways in which you bring expectations about program into the building. And this building does not do this because it has no clear entry. In fact, what you think to be the entry is actually a route to go through it, and you come out the other end. To get into the spaces, you have to negotiate fairly tortured ramps. You may be confronted with a view of the outside but only a part of the sky will be given. This building breaks the conventional rules for separating outside and inside. One often encounters views that let one see, in a matter-of-fact way, the “backsides” of forms made for “front purposes,” such as the spaces that are left over under ramping elements. The spaces themselves have certain intrusions in them that don’t allow them to become rooms that are closed in the classical or classical-modern way, but they remain sort of installed voids. Columns are sometimes inclined and do not unify themselves into a classical system because they do not look out into outdoor spaces designed for viewing. There are several qualities in the organization of the building that are rough and throw you back onto yourself rather than fit you into a program. You are supposed to move around with this building; it allows you to just get moving without following in step with the explicit and implicit program of the institution “culture.”

EK: In that way, it perhaps does set up a close comparison. It would seem that that’s the intention.

JK: It’s the intention, but I don’t think it’s close enough, by a long shot, because once you’re through it a couple of times, you’re done with it. It becomes another museum building. And that’s true for all of Koolhaas’s buildings. He is cynical in the way in which he ultimately accepts the program. He doesn’t take the retro-modernist ethical position of Tschumi, which twists the program to the point where something else comes out of it. As a close comparison, this building would have to allow you to construct yourself anew. This does not happen because Koolhaas remains an architect in the usual sense of the word by manipulating typologies, and that manipulation stays within the framework. The same is true of

conditions of manufacturing, and the like. It could deal explicitly with the limits of conditions for the capacities available to whatever medium one is working within, be it architecture, cinema, painting, music, politics, and so on. Inextricable from a savage practice would be an intimate knowledge of and working with a radical ethics. Clearly, the work of Arakawa and Gins is within this realm. It takes itself neither too seriously (for it must be ludic) nor too lightly (for the continuation of the human race hangs in the balance, in the face of such utter atrocities as Hiroshima and Auschwitz). The savage practice is in alignment with a critical will—with an intelligent, cunning, benevolent Dionysian frenzy.

What do you think about Arakawa and Gins's proposal that architecture be used for a full-scale study of what it means to be an architectural body and for an ongoing investigation into the dynamics of personhood?

JESSE REISER (JR): Arakawa and Gins's triadic conception of landing sites—perceptual, imaging, and architectural—represents the intertwined strands from which what they call the “event fabric of the world” is woven. The common feature of these linked processes is that each may be understood within their work as operating within three distinct modalities. First, in the psychological sense of being a conceptual framework used to grasp sense data. Second, as an instrumental framework operating in traditional linear fashion. And third, as an instrumentality operating in nonlinear ways—a schema operating within a complex adaptive system. The concept of “landing sites” operates as an analytical tool for describing the embedded flux of a body in the world. The interrelatedness of the triad's elements—in terms of priority, emphasis, and linkage—makes it possible to describe or predict any possible relationship of the body to the world. In this sense, there are two distinct modalities: the first is a means of analyzing spatial and temporal mixtures of bodies in given situations; the second provides propositional devices, specifically architectural ones. In place of the Cartesian way of conceiving the world—as pure extension with a consequent split between subject and world—landing sites schematize the body and the world as implicated in each other. This would appear to affiliate Arakawa and Gins's project with phenomenology, albeit of a radical sort. The conception of “ubiquitous sites” returns us to a generalizing system without body yet always in tension with a spectrum of influences that shade into one another. The body impacted into its own affects is at one end of the spectrum; the world as pure extension is at the other end. The conflating of these poles (person and world) might seem a reasonable outcome, but, as Arakawa and Gins argue, the space between is always an actual site—a constructed site—the site of architecture. The opening that ubiquitous sites enable in the apparently insoluble conundrum of body-in-world/world-in-body achieves a shift from an analytical modality to a propositional one, and it opens their project to systems that, though very much a part of the world, are not properly bound up with, are not intelligible in terms of, the body or the world.

Eisenman. They don't go far enough, in terms of dislocating the outer and inner programs that are at work.

EK: I agree with you. Koolhaas's agenda is one where the strategy of camouflage is used; the use of specific tactics—within the overall already fairly standard organizational program—forms a space that sets up a gentle dislocation. The question we are talking about is whether a dislocation of that nature is sufficient to produce a result where you walk out of the building and are ready to replace the way that you configure yourself in relationship to other people. How about the question of immortality or death?

JK: Before we go into that issue, I'd like to discuss Holl's place in relation to Arakawa and Gins. I've argued that he should be included here for a close comparison because he is close to the idea of the procedural. He works with the body in a way that lets other things happen—but which may not necessarily dislocate a person enough. He allows people to be more connected with their bodies, to almost glide out of certain patterns. For example, at the KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, the building's curving walls set up a space that—rather than conform to the standard ways of displaying and viewing artworks—situates the person vis-à-vis the city and generates particular qualities of light as the conditions for seeing. This building dislocates subjects by proceeding first from the sited body. It avoids the pitfalls of holding on to the institution of architecture that looks at things first from the outside, then manipulates them. In this sense, Holl is closer to Arakawa and Gins than Koolhaas is, although I suppose he doesn't have a radical agenda.

EK: I wonder if any of these architects think that it's important not to die? It's certainly something that Arakawa and Gins want to be taken seriously. And the question becomes, “What techniques are there for not dying?” I'd like to return to the point you made earlier that within Eastern culture a realization of this is something tied to a “soft and gentle” dislocation—to more of an internalization of the dislocation of space and spatial sequence. Thus, the question comes to mind, is it merely enough for Arakawa and Gins to suggest the possibility of a nonlinear time, to suggest the possibility of a kind of immortality? My initial response is always that it is necessary to develop the techniques, but at the same time, if one acknowledges the possibilities, then the techniques to a certain extent become internalized. I do myself believe that time does not need to be framed in the linear sense. Yet, that realization alone is not enough to enable me to move in and out of time, to become a “stuttering god.” I constantly wonder what techniques, what tactics are necessary to achieve this, to engage habit critically?

JK: This is obviously the most difficult issue that we are trying to deal with vis-à-vis architecture. It is usually handled in the realm of religion or something like religion.

Are we not in need of a new natural order of things? An artificially derived one? By making close comparisons between experiences, or events—by making a concerted use of artificial terrains and architectural surrounds that are juxtaposed to augment or contradict one another—can we make an order more conducive to the needs of the human species?

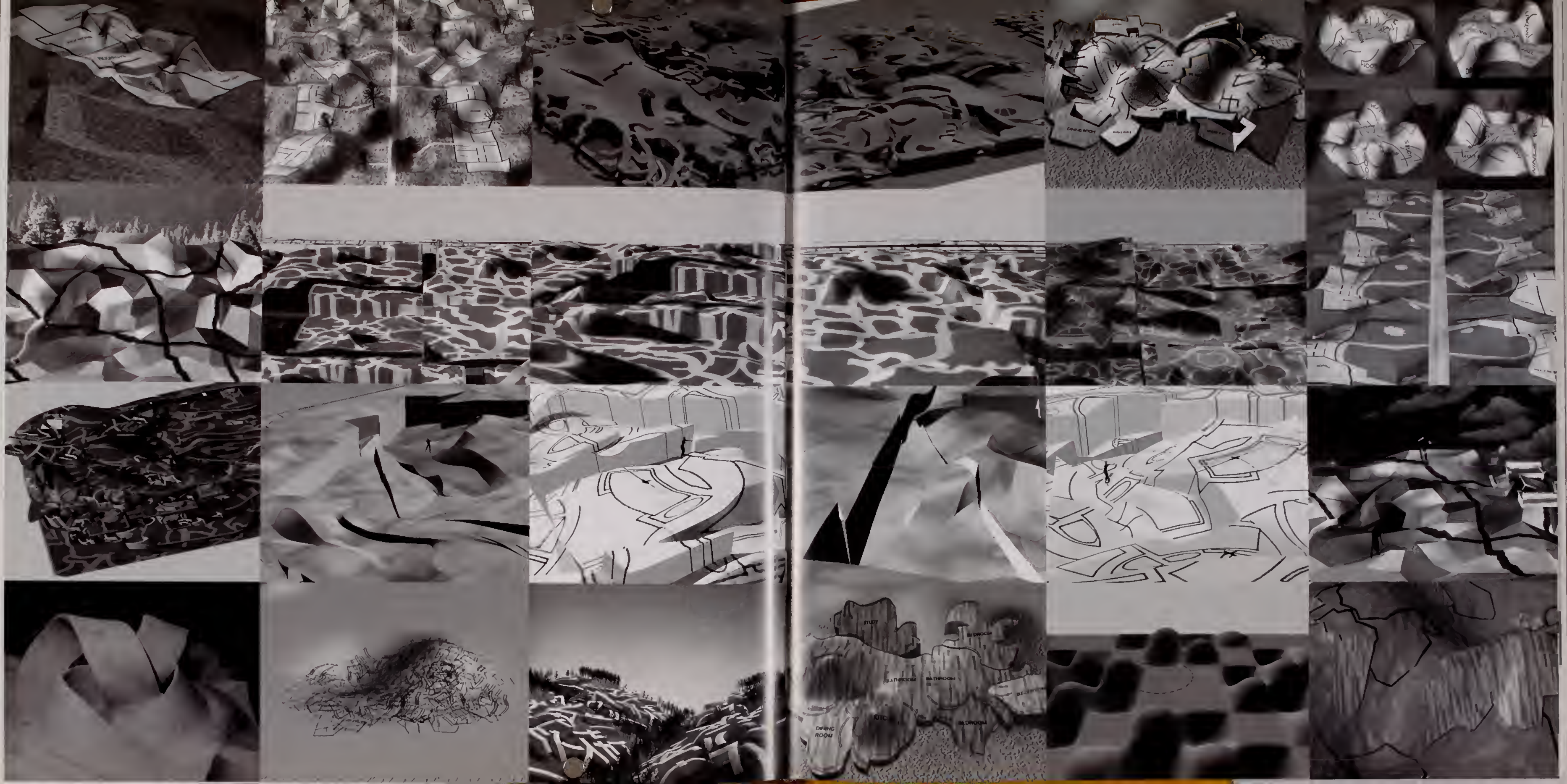
JK: Arakawa and Gins's architecture sites itself in and against the terrain we live in. They use superimposition—by multiply occupying the same site or by repeating environments in disparate sites and so superimposing in memory—in order to construct a new spatiality. They lay one order over another not simply to generate conflicts but to generate conditions for a multiplicity of sitings that offer positions from which one can rebuild the mechanisms that normally produce the body-person-site complex. This superimposition is akin to a condensation of different dimensions of lived space. It produces a folded space that propels us beyond the rules of Euclidean space. The normal gradations of distance are overturned; other dimensions of space rush in and open up. Arakawa and Gins also perform a spatially distant superimposition *in time* by repeating resemblances. Through resemblance, one perceives and becomes aware of how the slightly “other” current siting of oneself is different from the earlier one and thus, in reverting, one can see the mechanisms by which one sited oneself before. Repetitions of resemblances build the “city” that we inhabit as our “phantom limbs,” which then join forces with the “artificial limbs” that are the constructed environments that give us multiple and extended perceptual sitings.

Arakawa and Gins's architecture emerges as discontinuous *instances* of labyrinthine order repeated but with certain differences, such as a multiplicity of nearly recognizable entrances or a fragmentary assemblage of walls nearly forming a room. The traditional determinations of space by walls are replaced by “screen valves,” which do not enclose but act like filters or skins that trigger and direct flows of perceiving—flows of siting. Such *instances* of architecture repeatedly range across the terrain, prompted by the patterns of paths or by the repeating characteristics of the terrain itself or by a need to reach a certain density of spatial determinations.

Experimentation is based on the assumption that controlled repeating and comparing of results and the repeatability of specific results constitute the only sustainable epistemological method. This method enables us to take the very first step, that is, to identify (to recognize) this or that and then to derive objectifiable knowledge. Since for Arakawa and Gins the experimenter/perceiver cannot be separated from the perceived object, their repeating is not an induced mechanical recurrence but is closer to what I call “returning,” which is a double movement of situating from oneself into an other *while* the other is coming into us with our returning to ourselves. Returning is the essential relation in perceiving, in remembering, in the forming of desire, of will, of consciousness, and in the construction of a wider and freer self-body. It is what we may presume to be the aim of life's freedom-directed self-creativity.

EK: There is also a very direct moral response that Arakawa and Gins ground some of their arguments in by citing Auschwitz and Hiroshima as one motivating force for developing a utopian society that does not believe in death, that doesn't have a graveyard. And you can make interesting correspondences to fictional ideas of utopia developed by people like Gabriel Garcia Márquez. There are certain resonances because of Márquez's notion of the relationship to language and time that is developed in his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. He dislocates the notion of the construction of madness, the notion of linear time, the notion of the development of character, the notion of the individual. There is a very interesting relationship to the inchoate, and one of the things that I've always brought to the reading of Arakawa and Gins's work is the question of how they can take their ideas and bring them to the same level of deployment that Márquez has used. What we're looking for is a set of devices to produce an alternative subject, devices that really have a different relationship to time. Márquez's writings—as well as Italo Calvino's—are examples of devices, culturally and socially, that produce an alternative subject with an alternative relationship to time and faith. I do have a faith—it's not a religious notion—that time is not linear, and that we are not completely bounded by physicality. I would also accept as a workable possibility the fact that an ending is not the final conclusion or is not a hostile crisis.

JK: The presence of death, and of being bound by linear time, is more of a saving grace than one would normally begin to think. As long as you have death, you can do what you do and one day will be absolved of it. In a funny way, it's actually a solution that allows you to go on with all sorts of things because there will be a final resolution in the fact of your death as a body and person. The Nazis referred to their genocide against the Jews as “the final solution,” and the atomic bombings were used as a means of “ending” conflict by inflicting death. Atrocity is, in fact, a way of ending conflict. What Arakawa and Gins are saying is that if there were no death you would have to truly resolve everything. Everything. Because you would have no way of getting out of it. So the question is how would you do architecture if you couldn't get out by your own death? Putting it this way, an ethical revolution would have to follow immediately. We don't have to erect all these monuments as compensations for death. It is the central issue that Arakawa and Gins raise, and I don't think that any architecture today really addresses this in a critical and productive way.



TERRAIN

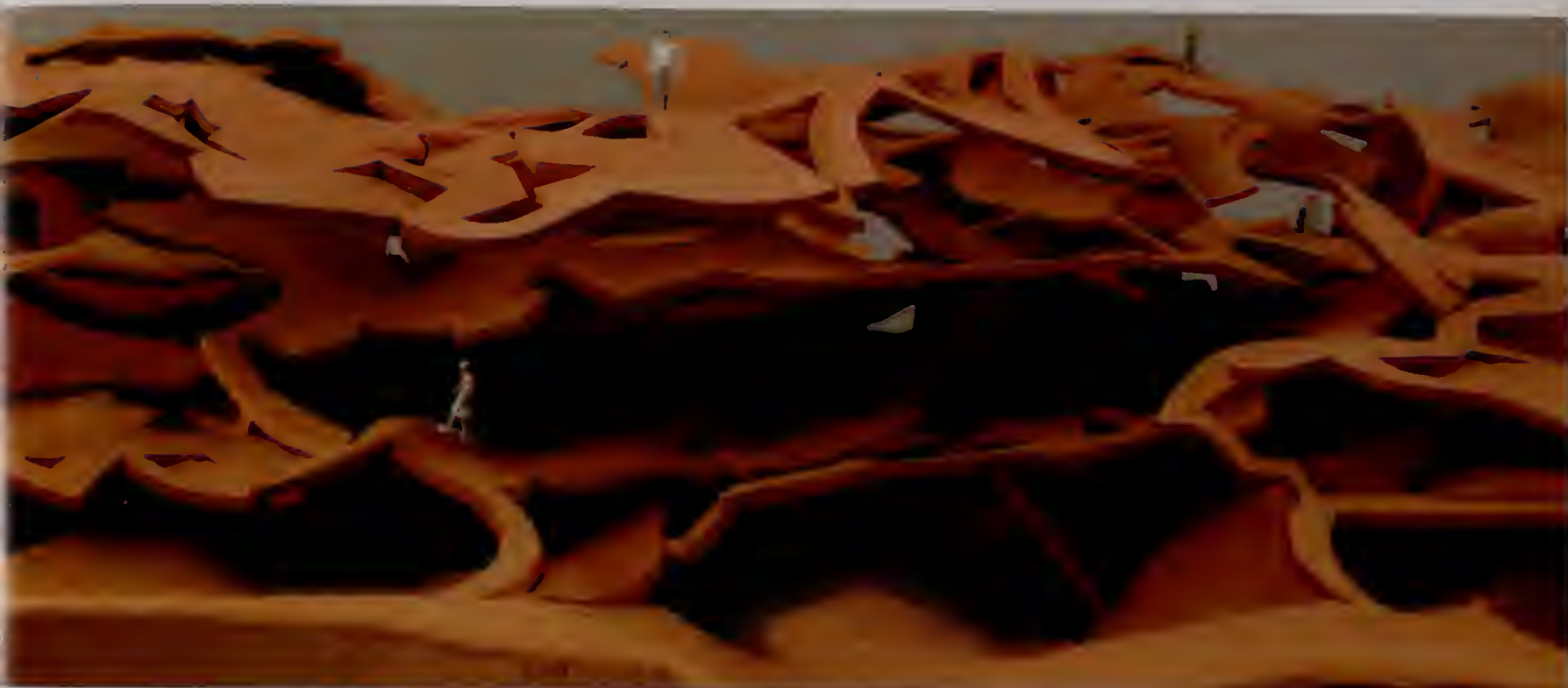


Terrain Study Model no. 1 1985
Cardboard, foam rubber, paint, plaster, and Styrofoam, 10 x 53 x 53 inches

pages 222-23

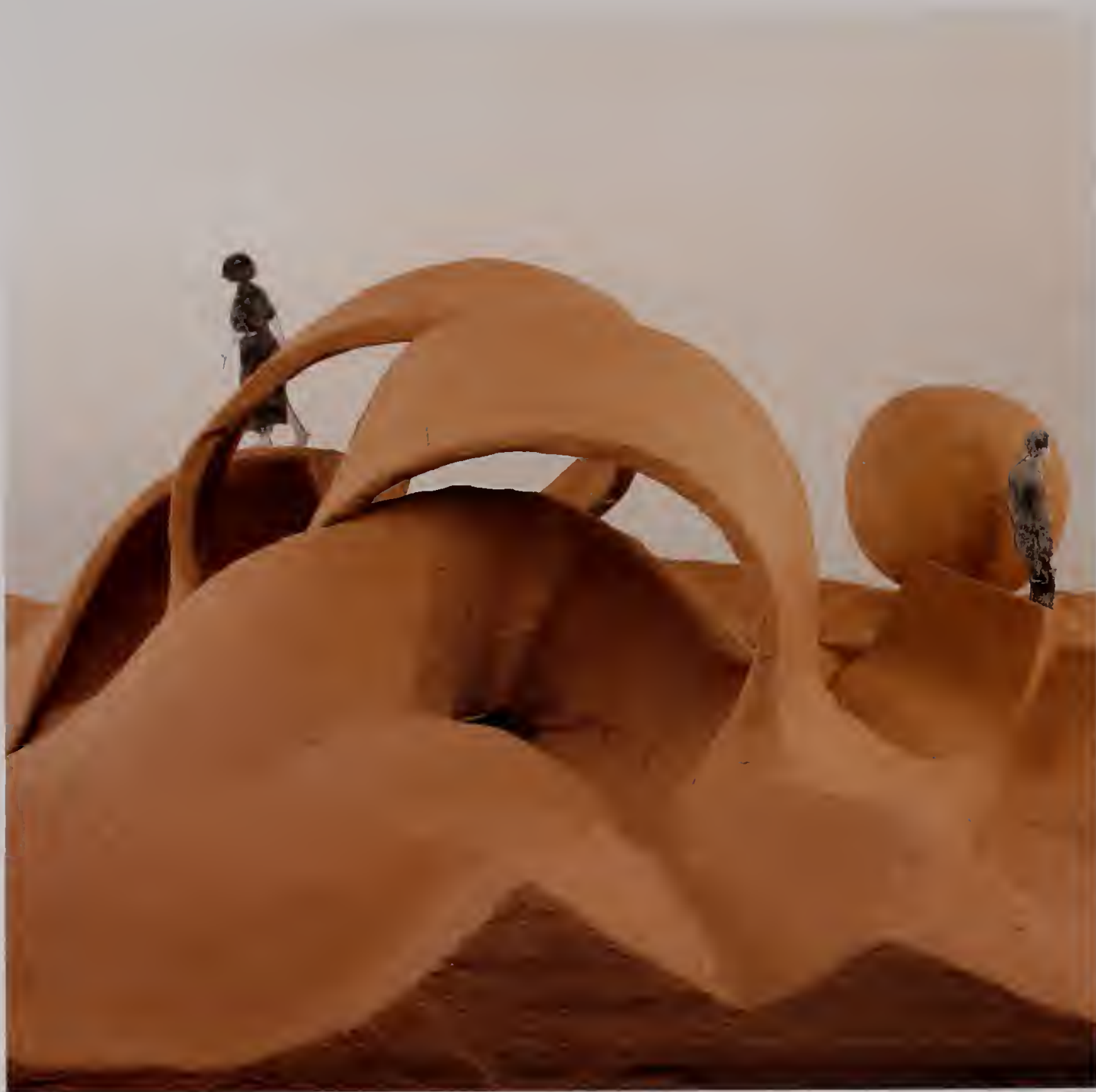
Terrain Wall 1994

Terrain Wall is a large-scale overview of reversible destiny terrains



Terrain Study Model no. 2 1985 (detail)

Basswood, cardboard, foam rubber, paint, plaster, and Styrofoam, 16 x 73 x 49 inches



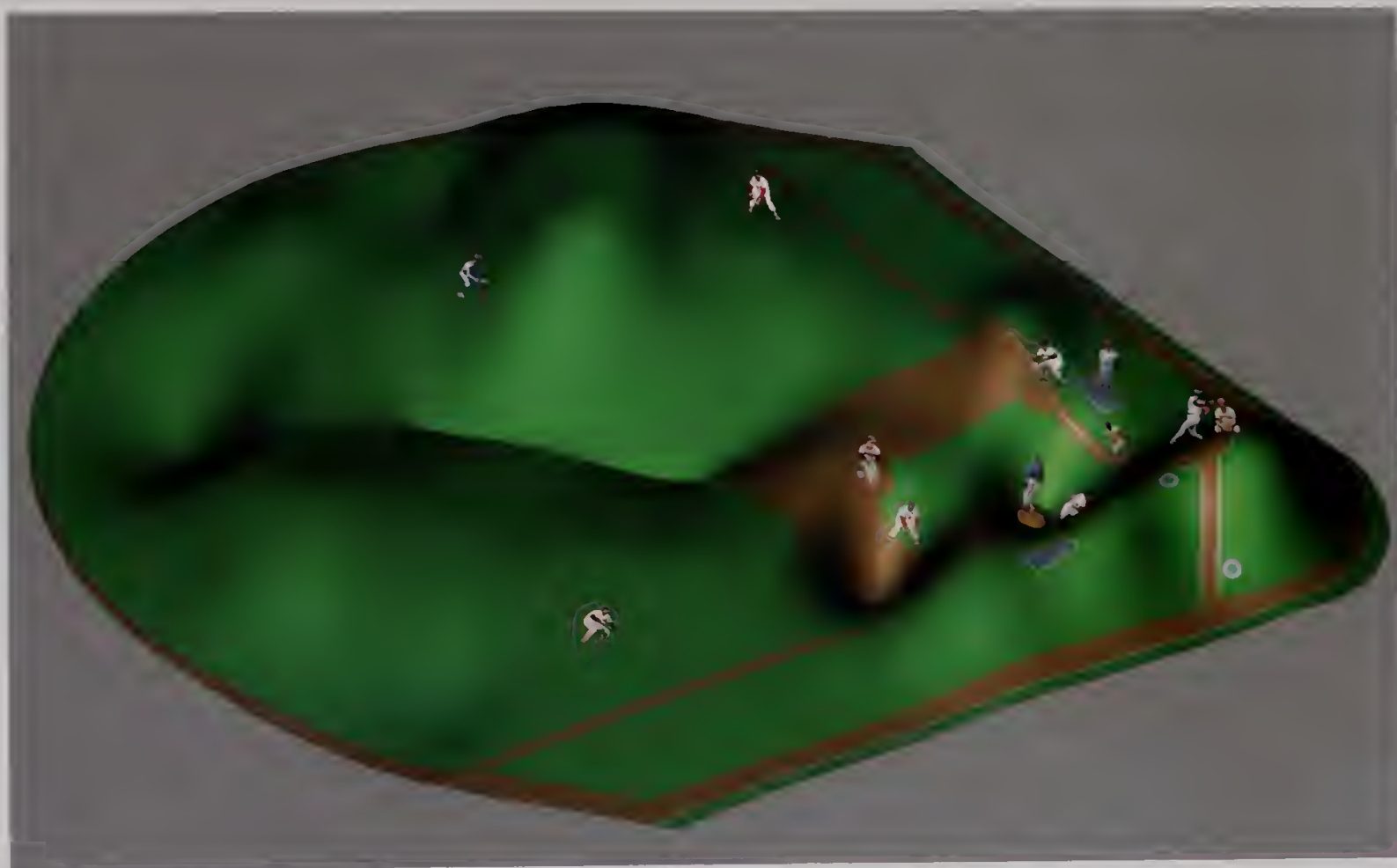


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Terrain Study Model no. 3, 1985-86 (detail)
Cardboard, foam rubber, paint, plaster, and Styrofoam, 20 x 84 x 54 inches

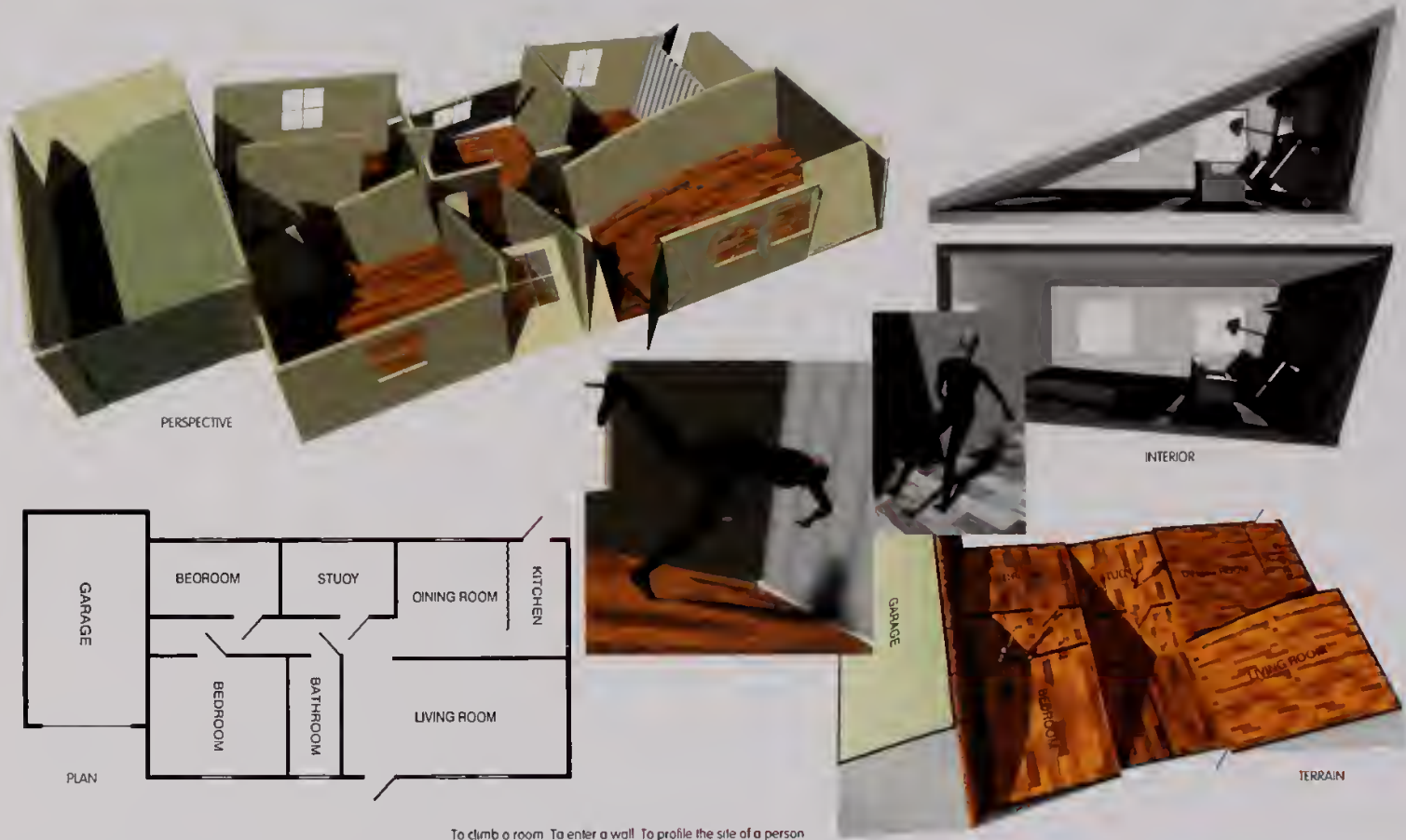
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Terrain Study Model no. 4, 1984
Cardboard, foam rubber, paint, plaster, and Styrofoam, 24 x 80 x 56 inches



Study for a Baseball Field for the Architectural Body 1991-92

TERRAIN STUDY - STANDARD HOUSE



To climb a room To enter a wall To profile the site of a person

Proposal Board for a Transitional House 1990

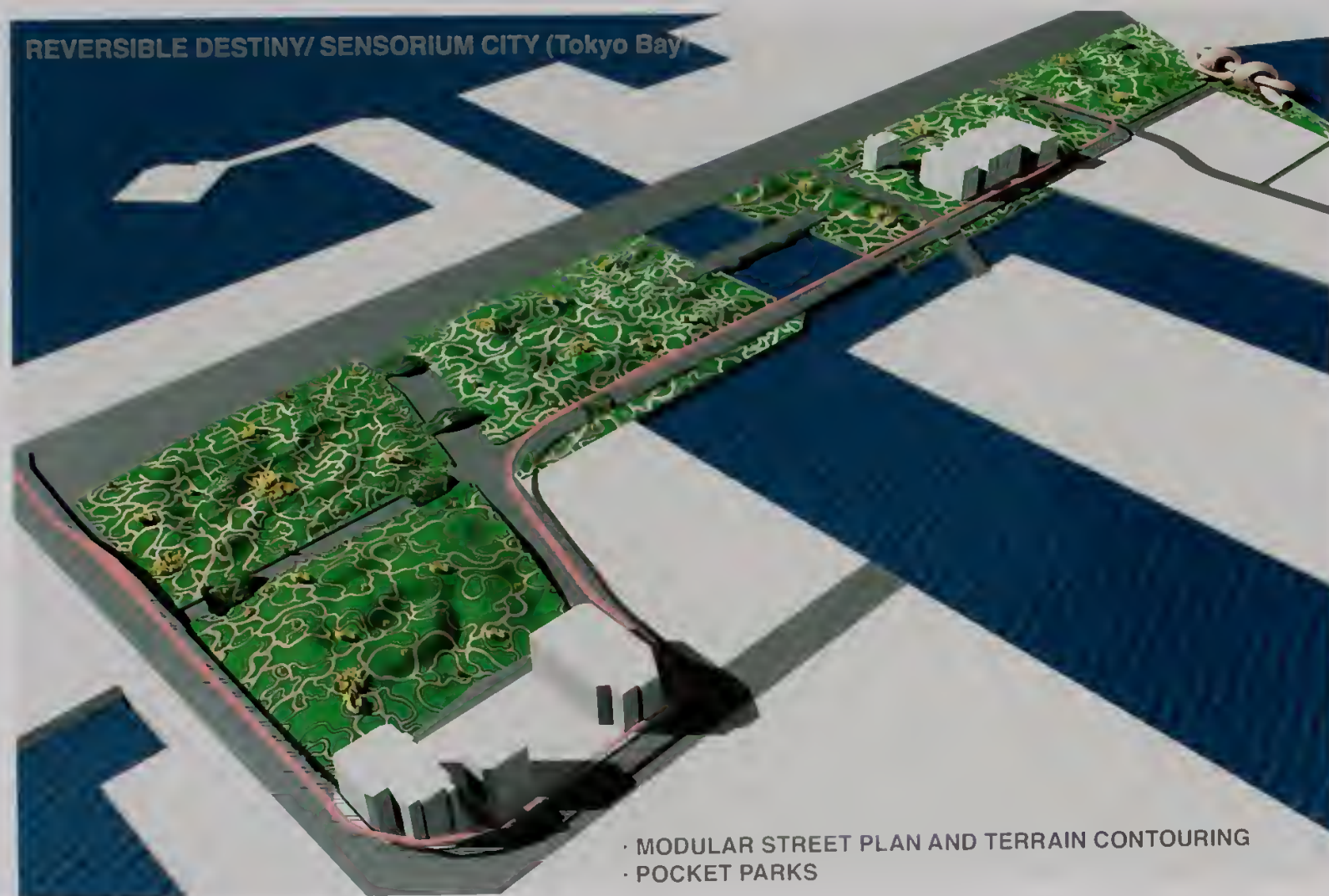
Its floors tilted to function as terrains, a standard house becomes a transitional one that can be used for reversible destiny purposes

**COMPLEMENTARY OPPOSITE DISTRICTS:
TOKYO BAY AND VENICE**

Initially, modules were formed by associating a single street plan (path plan) with two different artificial terrains. Two instances of each module, either in the same orientation or at right angles to each other, delineate a district or park zone. Five nested, square tracts that cut past and override the modules are rotated and tilted. Neighboring districts incorporate oppositely pitched global tilts, or one district's artificial terrain is the aboveground version of the other's underside. In passing through the districts, the body—the architectural body—lives as a conversation between articulated terrains.

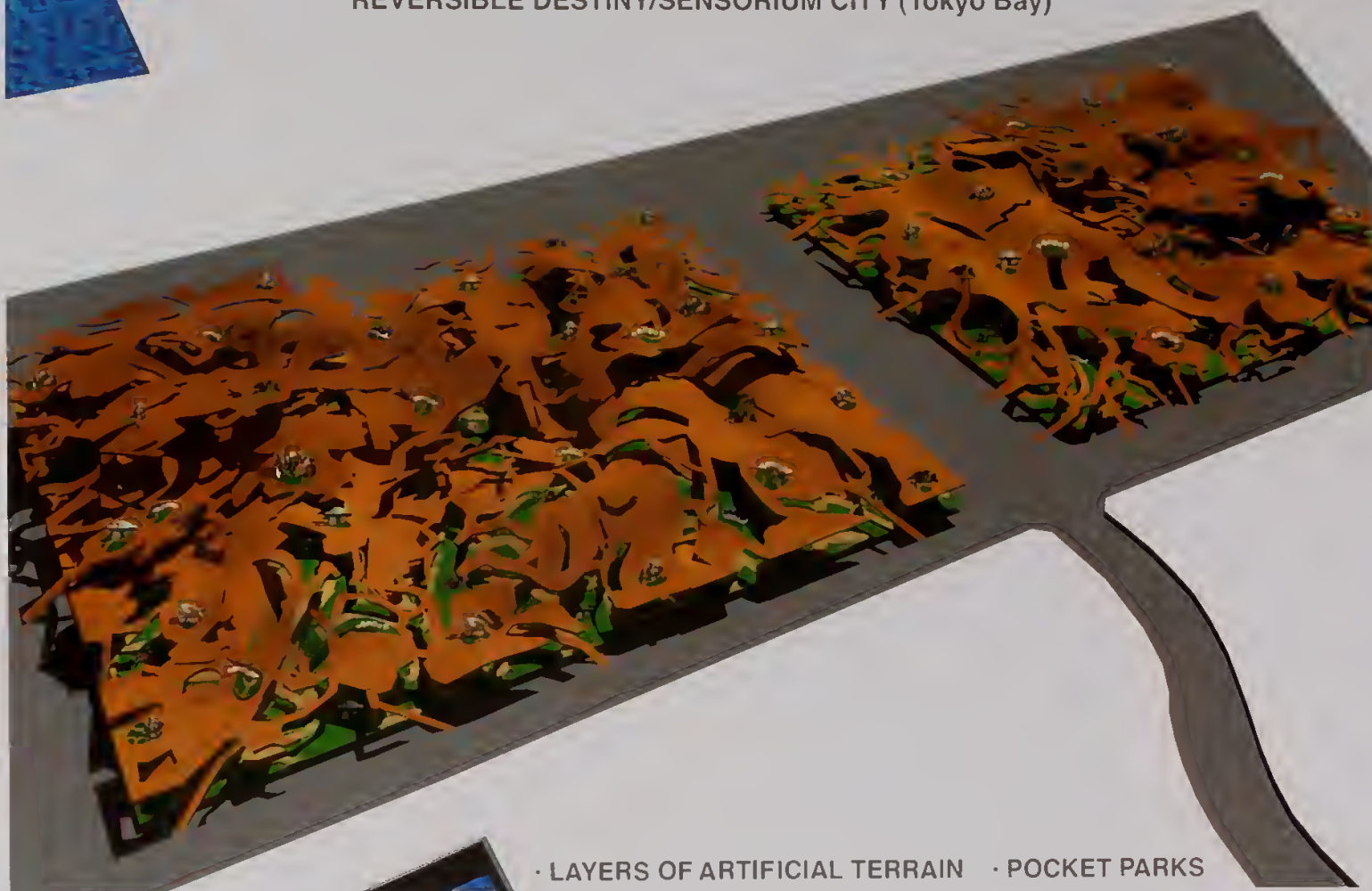


Terrain Study Model of Complementary Opposite Districts 1995
Cardboard, foamcore, paint, plaster, and rubber, 20 x 120 1/2 x 73 inches



Terrain Study for Reversible Destiny/Sensorium City (Tokyo Bay), 1993-94

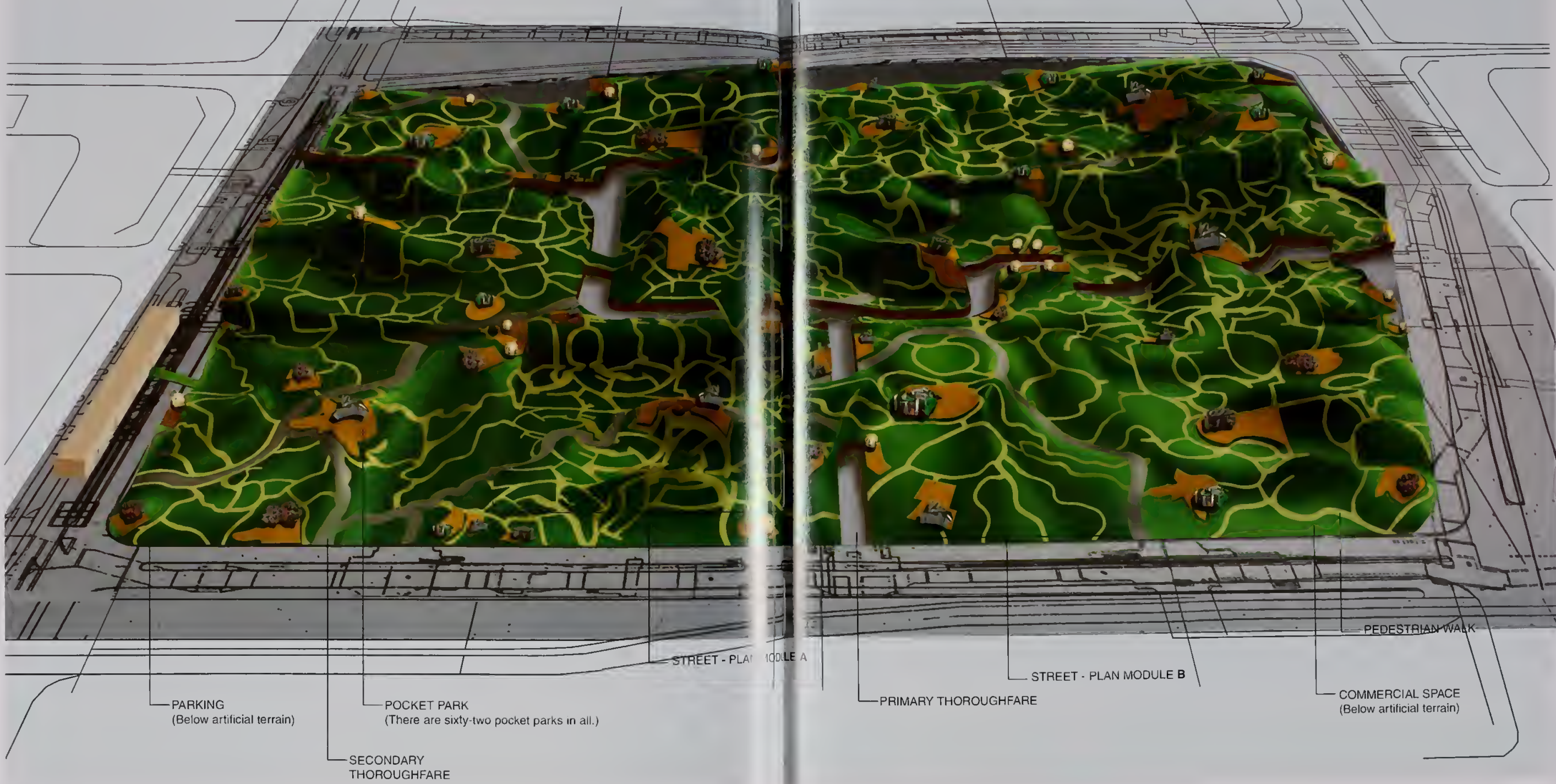
REVERSIBLE DESTINY/SENSORIUM CITY (Tokyo Bay)



· LAYERS OF ARTIFICIAL TERRAIN · POCKET PARKS

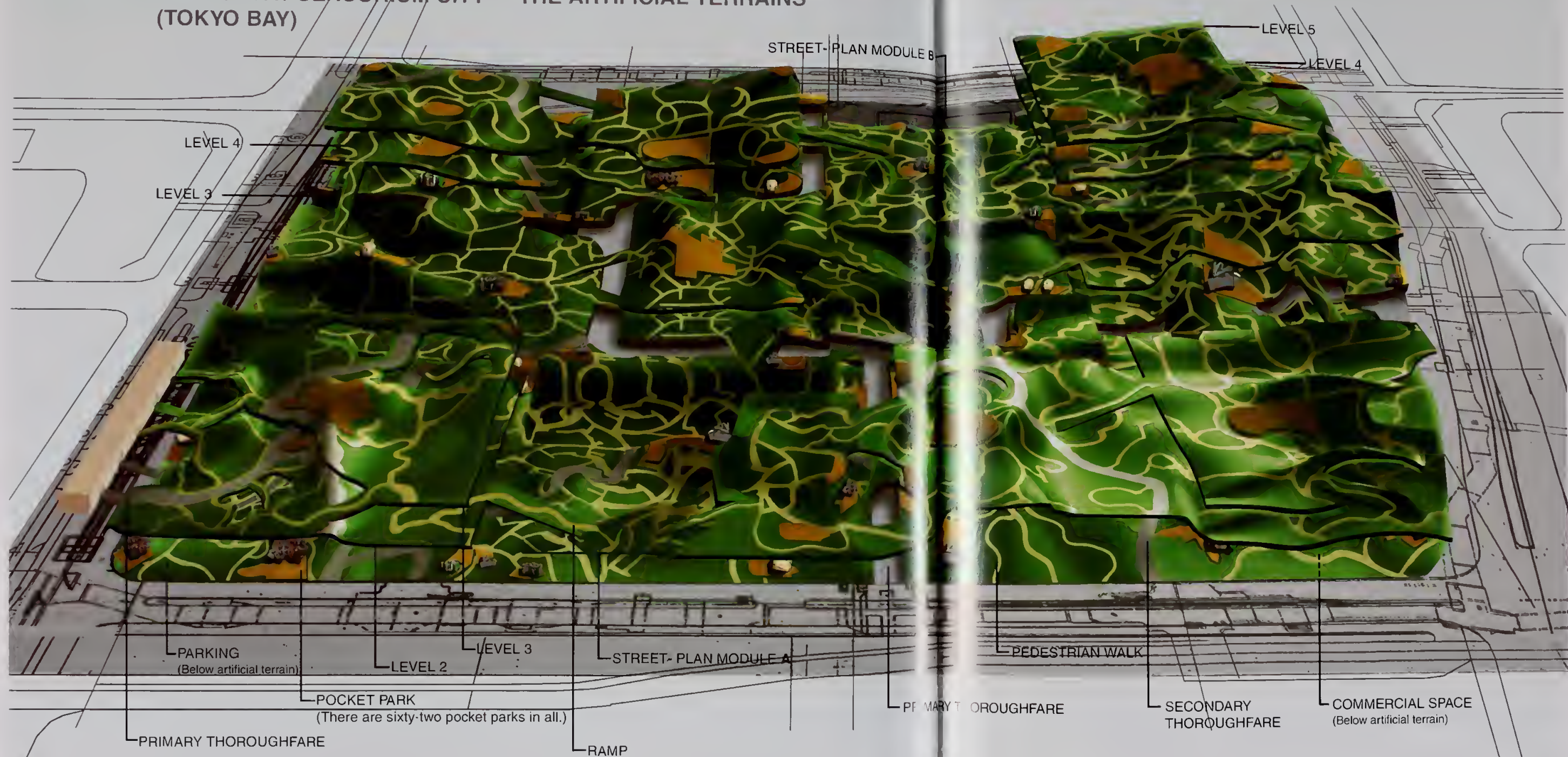
Terrain Study for Reversible Destiny/Sensorium City (Tokyo Bay) 1993-94

REVERSIBLE DESTINY/ SENSORIUM CITY — THE ARTIFICIAL TERRAIN



left
Terrain Study for Reversible Destiny/Sensorium
City (Tokyo Bay) 1995
pages 236-37
Terrain Study for Reversible Destiny/Sensorium
City (Tokyo Bay) 1995-96

REVERSIBLE DESTINY/ SENSORIUM CITY — THE ARTIFICIAL TERRAINS (TOKYO BAY)



Multiple horizons prevent a resolving of the view toward only a single point on a lone horizon. As vanishing point views with vanishing point, processes such as the apportioning out of landing sites determinative of the view and the getting of one's bearings through multiple sets of references come to the fore. The ever-present architectural body saunters forth as multidimensionally diagrammed.

REVERSIBLE DESTINY/ SENSORIUM CITY (Tokyo Bay)



· LAYERS OF HIGHLY ARTICULATED TERRAIN · NEIGHBORHOODS BASED ON MODULES

REVERSIBLE DESTINY CITIES

cities without graveyards

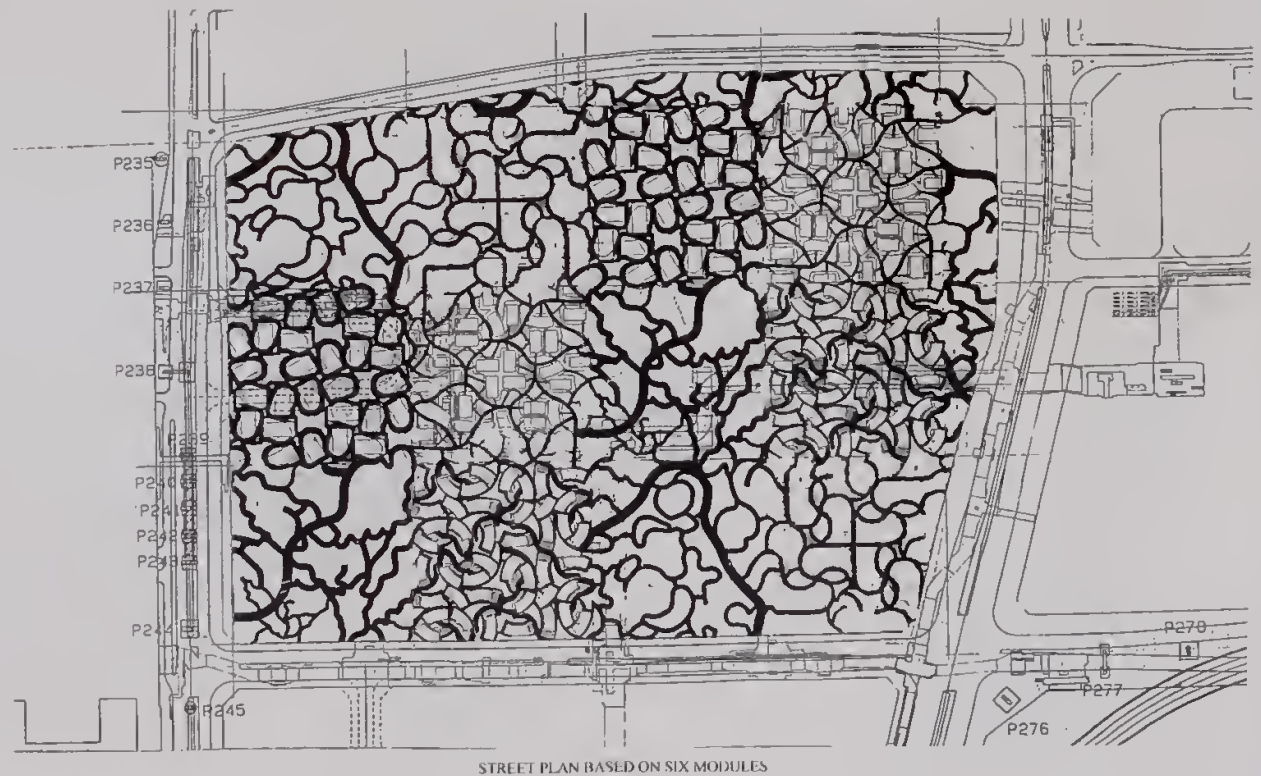
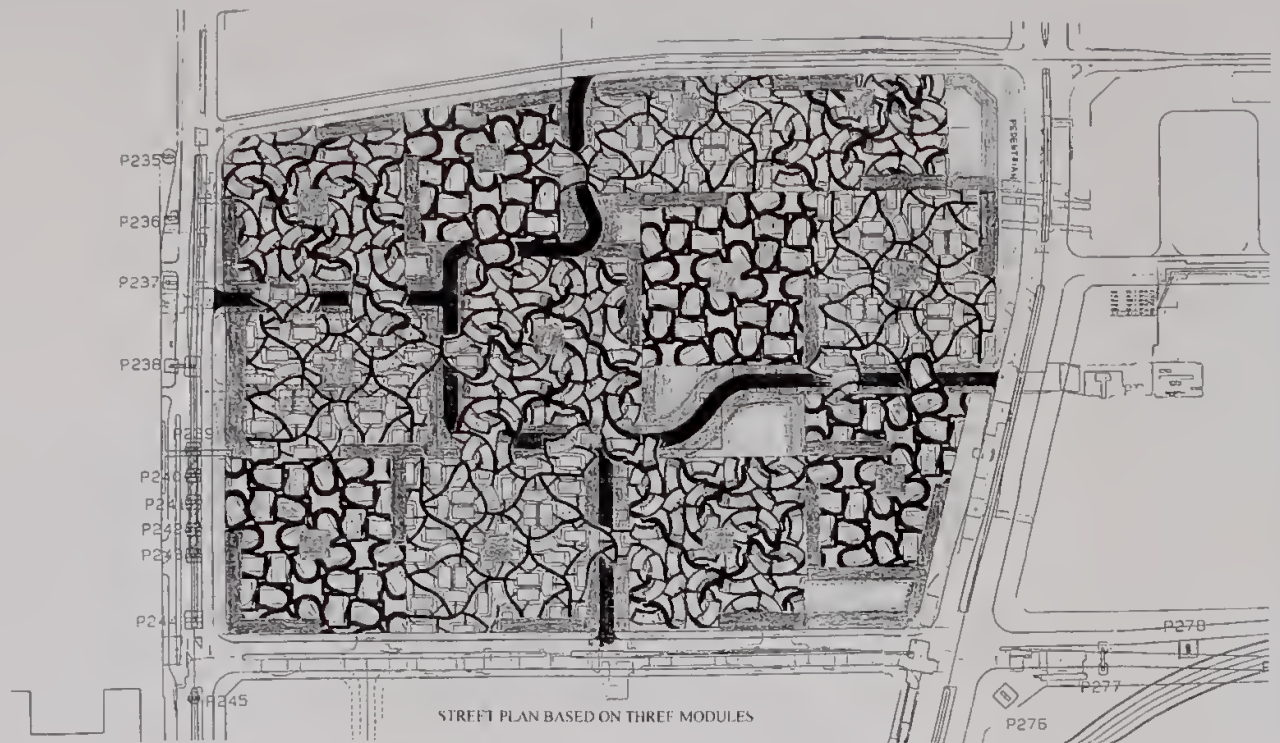
always only building your wherewithal

ask who you are and attempt, through
you, an answer, many answers

snap to reasoning attention as you

ease off reasoning and simply allow
an architecturally guided bodying forth

Study for Reversible Destiny/Sensorium City (Tokyo Bay) 1995-96



Modular Street Plans, 1994-95
Pencil on paper, each 11 x 17 inches

NOTES FOR REVERSIBLE DESTINY/SENSORIUM CITY (TO BE ERECTED ON LANDFILL IN TOKYO BAY)

The city stands as a giant tool of analysis, an inhabitable physical manifestation designed to track and display in every way imaginable how it is possible to be a body, or a sensorium, and what goes into forming a person.

What is sovereign in this city is the desire to find what ultimately rules and guides a percipient apparatus (a body). Unlike any other city, the *Sensorium City* is not set up merely to run on automatic, an ever-present reminder of the unconscious (of its designers initially and of its inhabitants eventually), but is instead designed to motivate, prompt, and impel each inhabitant to analyze her or his own existence. The *Sensorium City* is constructed out of artificial **TERRAINS** and defined by four distinct **MODULES**, each presented in a variety of orientations. It has numerous small, communal gardens, and each of its neighborhoods contains a **PARK** that is, in fact, a small village.

TERRAINS

Artificial terrains guide actions, routinely providing the unexpected. At times pitched to accord with what is in the vicinity and at other times to contrast with it, terrains are composed of rises and falls positioned to help light penetrate to the lower levels and for the sake of garden formation. Interiors are also given varying terrains instead of flat floors.

Intricate terrains cause the city and the body to operate conjointly—as much kinaesthetically, proprioceptively, and tactilely as visually. Responding to the demands of the artificial terrains, the body reconfigures its sensorium.

The city consists of three, and at times four, levels of terrain. Every dwelling opens onto an exterior terrain, making it possible for all inhabitants to live in garden apartments. A resolution of human events into a lone horizon is effectively dislodged by the multiple horizons of a multi-level terrain.

MODULES

Modules consist of winding paths and streets that extend along rolling terrains that are constructed as much to supply an abundance of events as to support a wide range of uses.

In a city composed of modules, directions and places cease to be unique. A resident moving from the beginning to the end of a module encounters a standard sequence of terrain changes and juxtaposed forms. As long as it is the same module-type that is being traversed, walks taken through the city heading north will be highly reminiscent of walks taken through it heading south, or in any direction for that matter.

Because the modules that define the city lie hidden within it, people come to recognize repeated forms and situations only gradually. Inhabitants may find themselves moving about their city in a continual state of *déjà vu*—but, given the circumstances, the concept of *déjà vu* fails to hold sway.

PARKS AS REVERSIBLE DESTINY VILLAGES

Every neighborhood will include a group of communal houses in a park setting. The parks will, in effect, be reversible destiny villages, glimpses of what comes next, visitations from the future. Parks will be, as usual, places where people go to unwind, but they will also be places to go for studying the body and its actions. Within the parks, residents will pursue reversible destiny, the study of how not to die, the reversal of the human destiny to be mortal. The surrounding architecture motivates visitors to consider, in a neutral and nonreligious way, the possibility that death might, after all, not be inevitable.

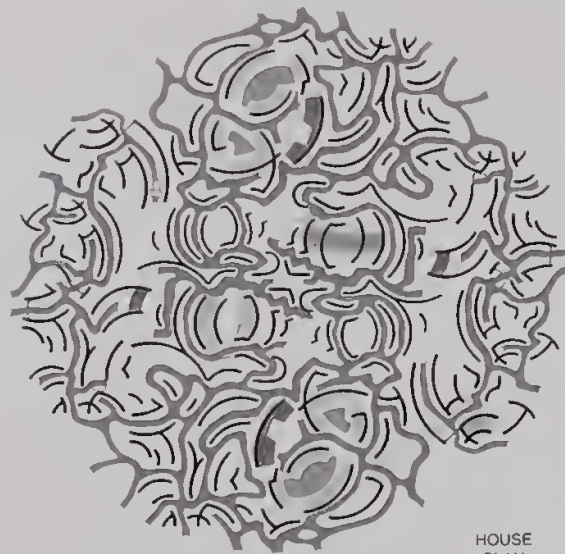
An individual or a family may elect to set up temporary residence within a communal house, within a reversible destiny village, within the park, so as to engage questions of existence more intensely. Learning how not to die starts with learning how to live as a maximally invigorated sensorium.

Comfort is no longer a factor. That it might take several hours to go from one room to another in a reversible destiny house is of no importance as long as the sensibility of the person traversing the room flowers and catches onto itself in transit. Reversible destiny houses consist primarily of entrances. One entry having been achieved, another situation of entering commences. The sensorium enters its own signals.

DESIGN TEAMS

Design teams will consist of artists, poets, architects, critical philosophers, phenomenologists, experimental psychologists, and cognitive scientists. Teams will be given modules or parts of modules with the infrastructure already in place and then will be asked to work out all the specifications for turning them into neighborhoods. They will be required to follow the curved street plans of the modules and to respect the topographical constraints of the artificial terrains. They will be asked to be extremely specific as to use; the positioning of absolutely everything must be thrown into question not for the sake of the residents' convenience, nor for any utopian purpose, but for the sake of exposing the sensorium to itself, a postutopian purpose. Design teams will be issued a list of situations and forms to effect this purpose.

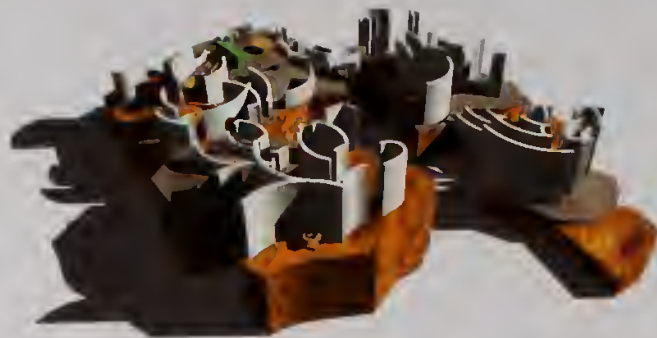
REVERSIBLE DESTINY MODULE no. 1



HOUSE
PLAN



CITY PLAN



MODULE A



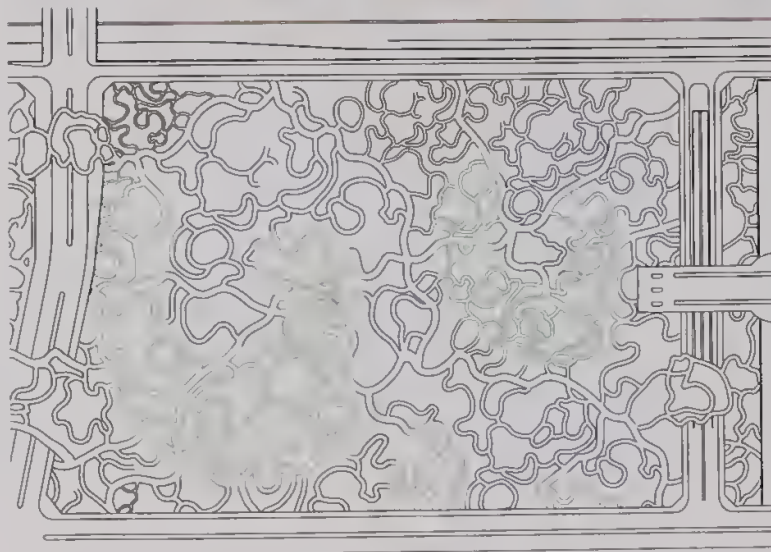
TERRAIN



MODULE B



AERIAL VIEW



STREET PLAN

The module that is the basis of the city plan is also the founding form of single- and two-family housing. In a city composed of modules, directions and places cease to be unique.

REVERSIBLE DESTINY/SENSORIUM CITY

Residents inhabit the city, linking and joining their sensibilities with it, the way a phantom limb inhabits and joins forces with an artificial limb. The city articulates the (communal) architectural body.

Study for a Reversible Destiny City, 1993



top

Model for a Reversible Destiny City 1993

Cardboard, foamcore, foam rubber, paint, paper, resin, and Styrofoam,
15 x 75 x 63 inches

bottom

Model of Reversible Destiny Module no. 1, 1993

Cardboard, paint, paper, and Styrofoam, 5 x 60 x 56 inches

REVERSIBLE DESTINY LOWER-MIDDLE-INCOME HOUSING COMPLEX



The REVERSIBLE DESTINY LOWER-MIDDLE-INCOME HOUSING COMPLEX not only provides shelter for its residents but actually intervenes with the universe on their behalf. Residents read the universe as a world in terms of its carefully delineated structure. Numerous markers allow residents to get their bearings to a far greater degree than has ever before been possible. Constructed as a series of close variations, the complex is a means for passing experience. Residents continually use one part of the complex to assess and critique another. Architecture exists to provide landing sites. The plan of the complex reappears within individual dwellings. Some dwellings will be versions of housing complexes other than their own. Beginning by relying as much on their houses as on themselves, residents eventually come to rely even more on their houses than they do on themselves. Houses relieve residents of having to have personalities. Those who cease being passive in relation to architecture are less likely to be cruel and murderous. The episodic will become as hallucinatory as non-hallucinatory. A house may become a substitute for a life.

REVERSIBLE DESTINY/SENSORIUM CITY (Tokyo Bay)



· PAIRING OF HIGHLY ARTICULATED TERRAINS-SEGMENTS
· NEIGHBORHOODS AS LABYRINTHS

top

Proposal board for **Reversible Destiny Lower-Middle-Income Housing Complex** 1991-92

bottom

Study for **Reversible Destiny/Sensorium City (Tokyo Bay)**, 1992-93

facing page

Close-up of a **Reversible Destiny/Sensorium City** 1991-92

CITY WITHOUT GRAVEYARDS [DETAIL]



Even longevity—albeit a postponement of the inevitable—is not enough. The status must be changed entirely. All consciousness involves, for the sake of the world, some degree of movement and landing-site displacement. The seeker of reversible destiny must master the landing-site configuring process from the start so that she may initiate alternative arrangements of landing sites.

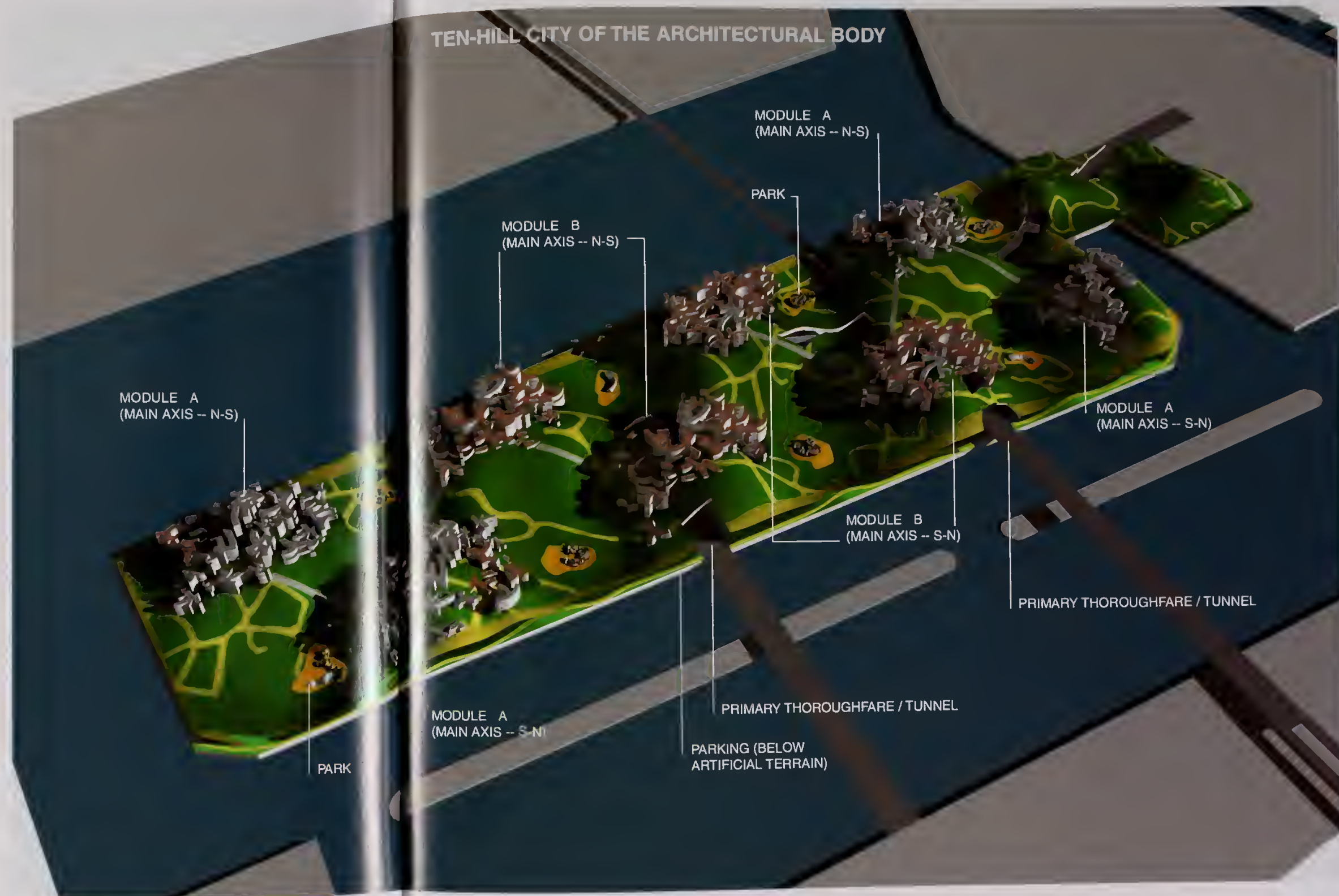


REVERSIBLE DESTINY/SENSORIUM CITY



Three distinct levels of terrain produce horizons at a variety of heights. A person cannot determine her position simply by referring to a single horizon. The city critically regulates the perceptual array, imposing a similar order on things and events on all sides. Due to the city's highly synthetic structure, what is in distance can at times seem to be proximate, an area not being traversed can be read as being traversed, or a neighborhood can suddenly appear to glide through the person who moves along within it.

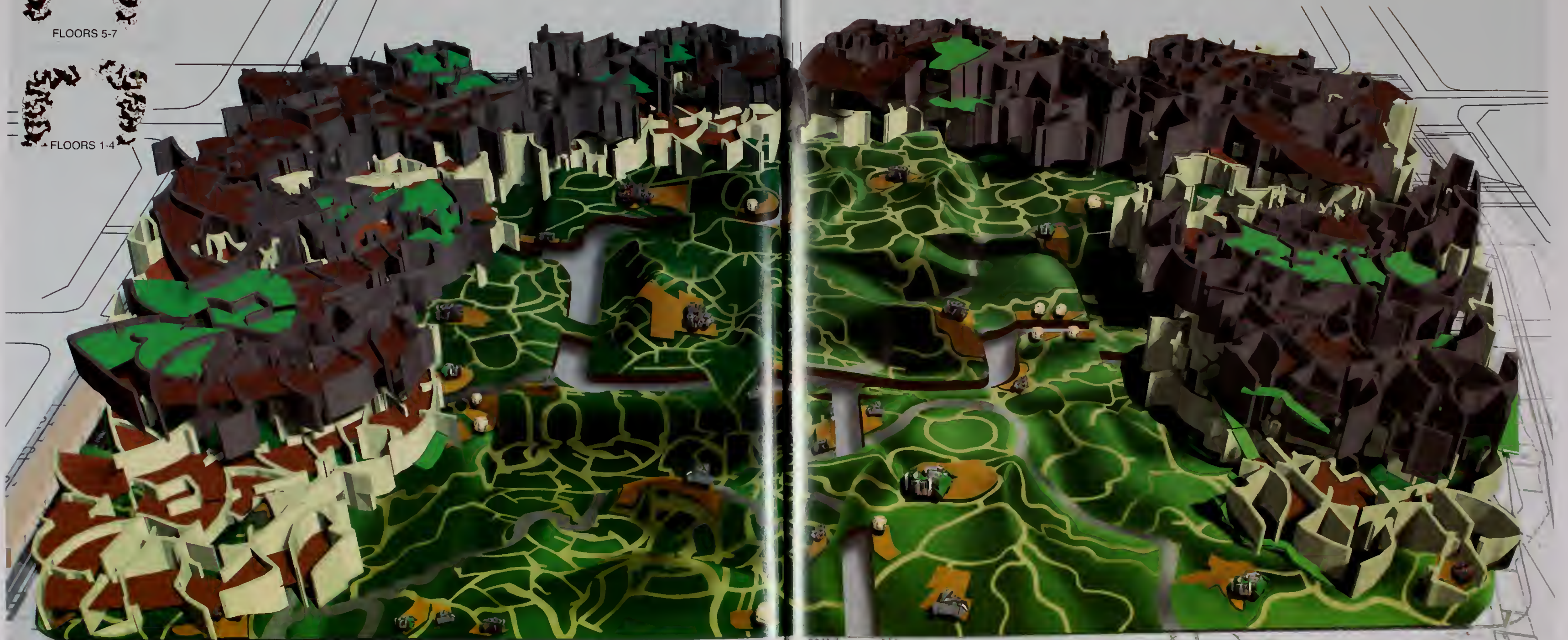
The body's project includes not only the living of life for a brief span, but also the combining of an open-ended perceiving with striving (learning how) not to die. A person and her body are projects of one another. Even longevity—as but a postponement of the inevitable—is not enough. The stakes must be changed. The prevailing state of affairs, in which a body-person is just one among any number of disposable goods, is totally unacceptable. The resolving of initiatives into a single horizon and into a sole and dire (always eventually downhill) destiny has had its day. “Waste products” wanting to eliminate death as an inevitability should with great fervor assemble here.



ANTIMORTALITY FRACTAL ZIPPER CITY

FLOORS 5-7

FLOORS 1-4



All contours of the city have their basis in twin L-shaped labyrinths that are mirror images of each other. Areas selected to be enclosed in one twin remain open public spaces in the other, making the two halves of the city complementary opposites in regard to function.

ARCHITECTURAL BODY CONFIGURING FARM CITY (REVERSIBLE DESTINY)



ISLE OF REVERSIBLE DESTINY—VENICE



ISLE OF REVERSIBLE DESTINY— VENICE

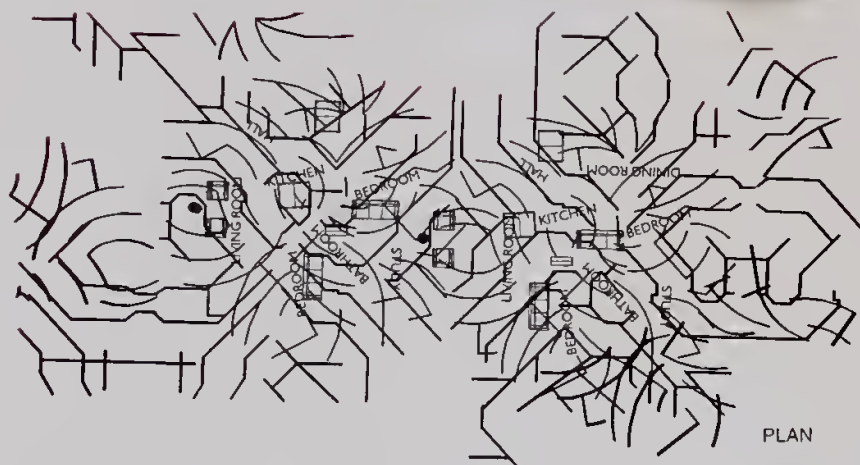
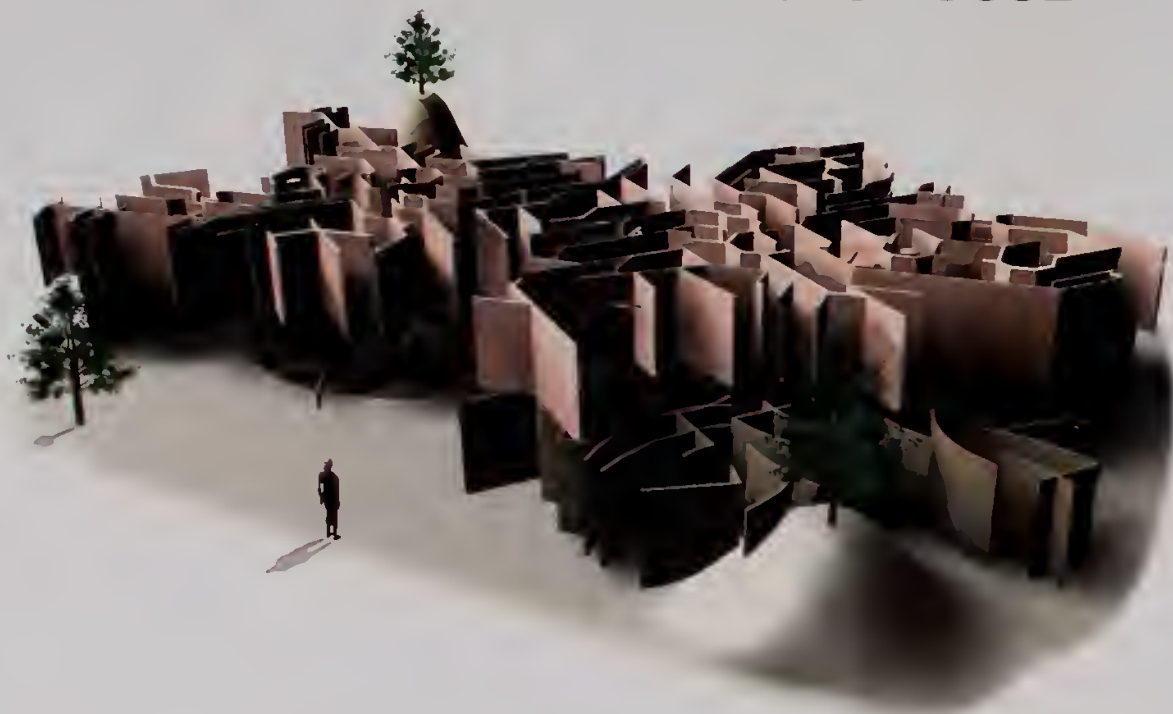
The island, composed of 365 gardens in which to observe one's actions and study how not to die, stands as a calendar that perpetuates life. Numerous passageways and trenches link sets of highly articulated terrain-segments that invite a wide range of bodily movements.

As a person steps onto this island, she feels herself to be all of the following combined: Gulliver, Alice, and . . . Bodhidharma. This island—an anti-cemetery—contrasts directly with San Michele.

Study no. 1 for Isle of Reversible Destiny—Venice
1979–present

REVERSIBLE DESTINY HOUSES

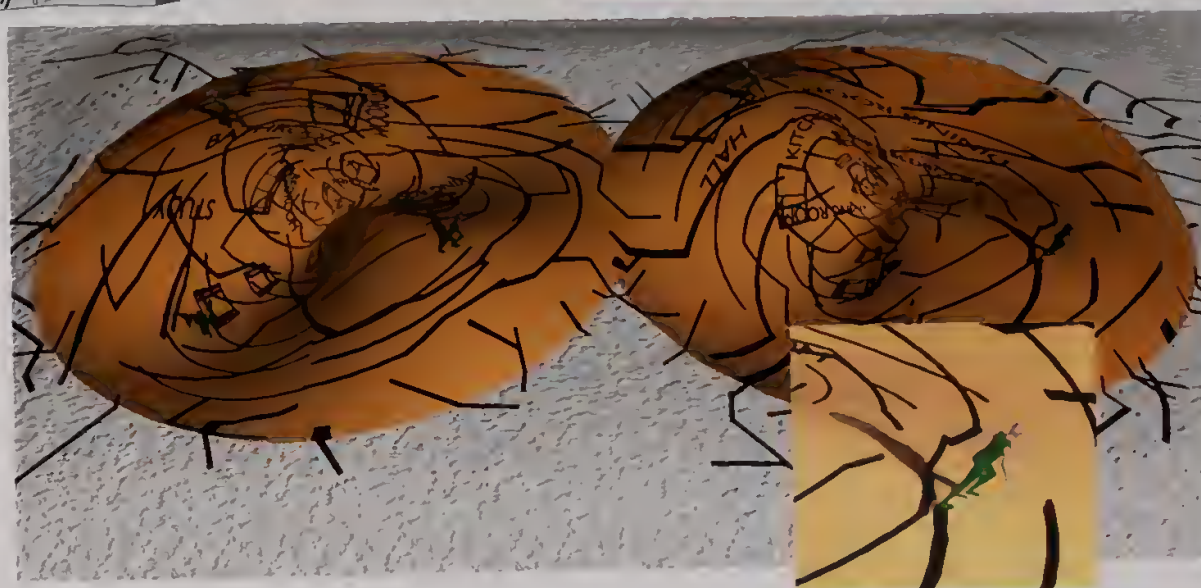
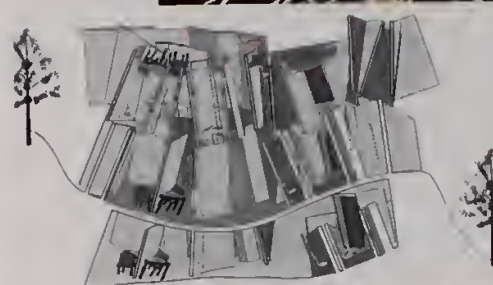
CRITICAL RESEMBLANCES HOUSE



The house consists primarily of entrances. Terrain predominates over plan. The house is composed of three levels of "reworked labyrinth" (groups of labyrinth-derived patterns of wall segments): a rectilinear group above two curvilinear ones, at the ground level and the basement. Thus, the body is invited to move through composite passageways--rectilinear above, curvilinear below--often in two opposing ways at once. It could take several hours to go from the living room to the kitchen. Parts of the kitchen or the living room reappear in the bedroom or the bathroom. It might take several days to find everywhere in the house that the dining room turns up.

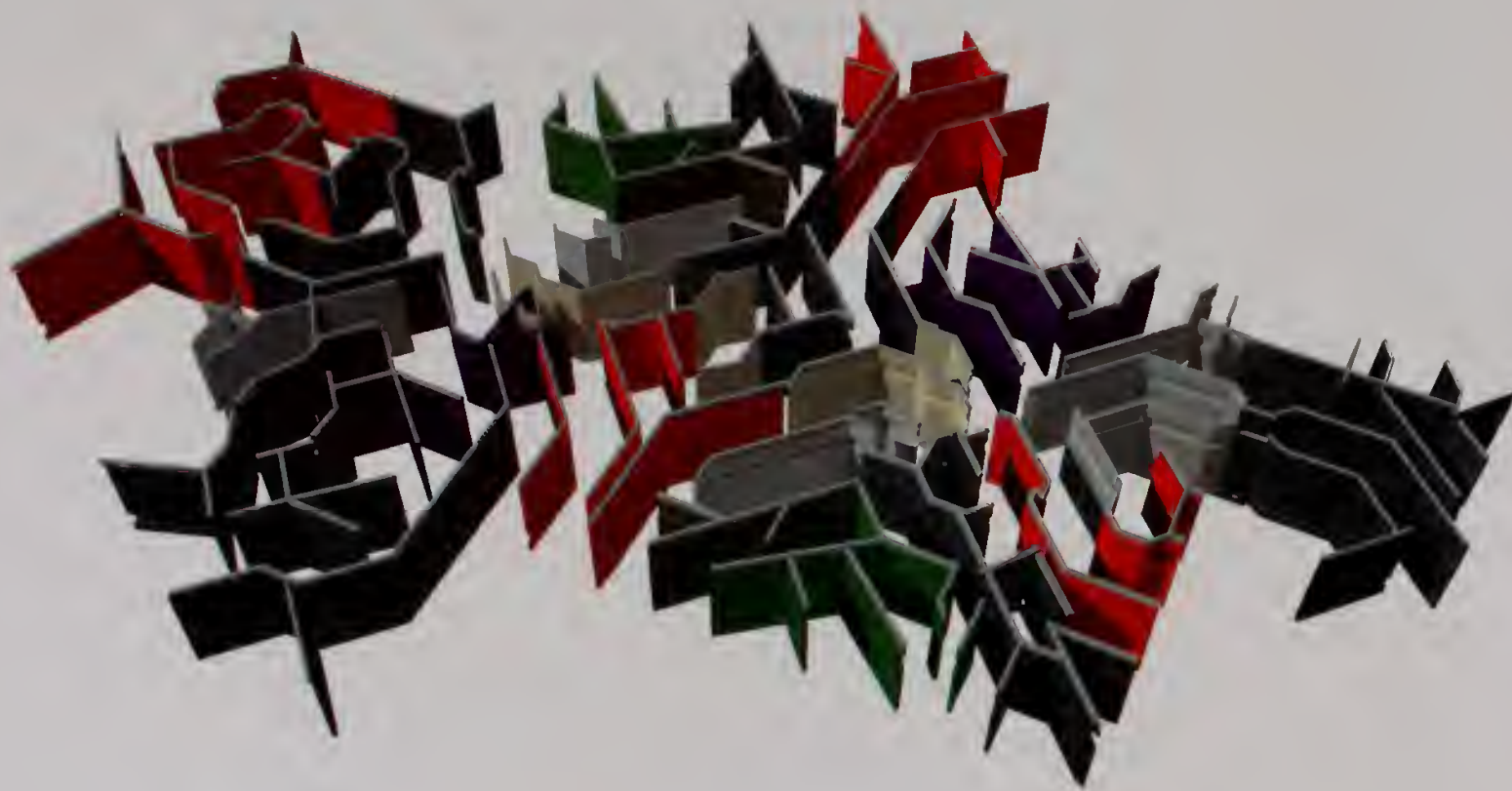


INTERIOR

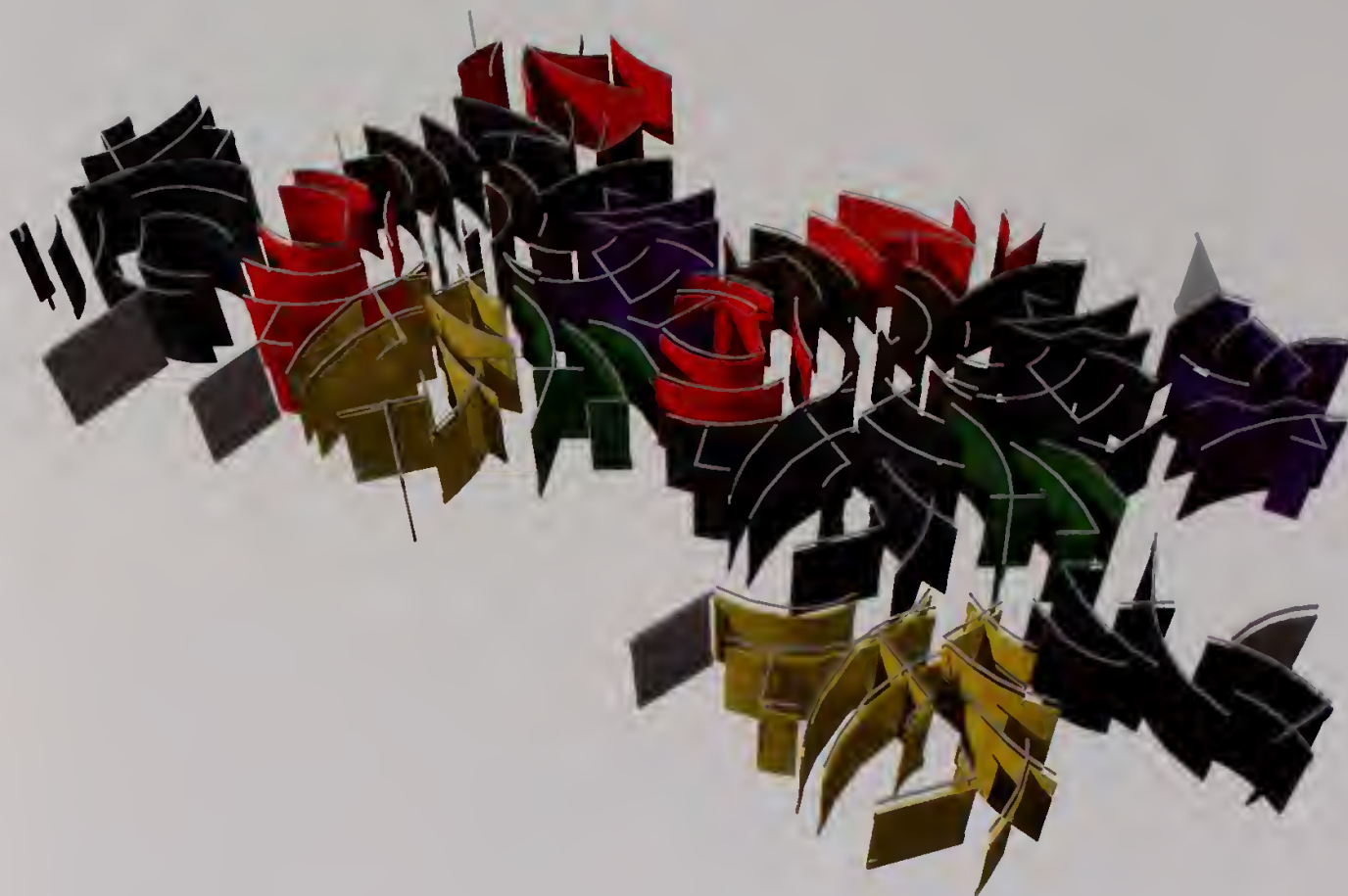


TERRAIN

Always to be featured: the underside of things. The house relieves one of having to have a personality. Residents who begin by relying as much on their houses as on themselves eventually may come to rely on their houses even more than on themselves. Finally, the house might itself one day become an architectural body, the primary resident of its own premises, a ready, near-animate (or animate), and loving substitute or stand-in for a resident who, given the relative primitiveness of the times and despite all her efforts, had no choice but to vanish.

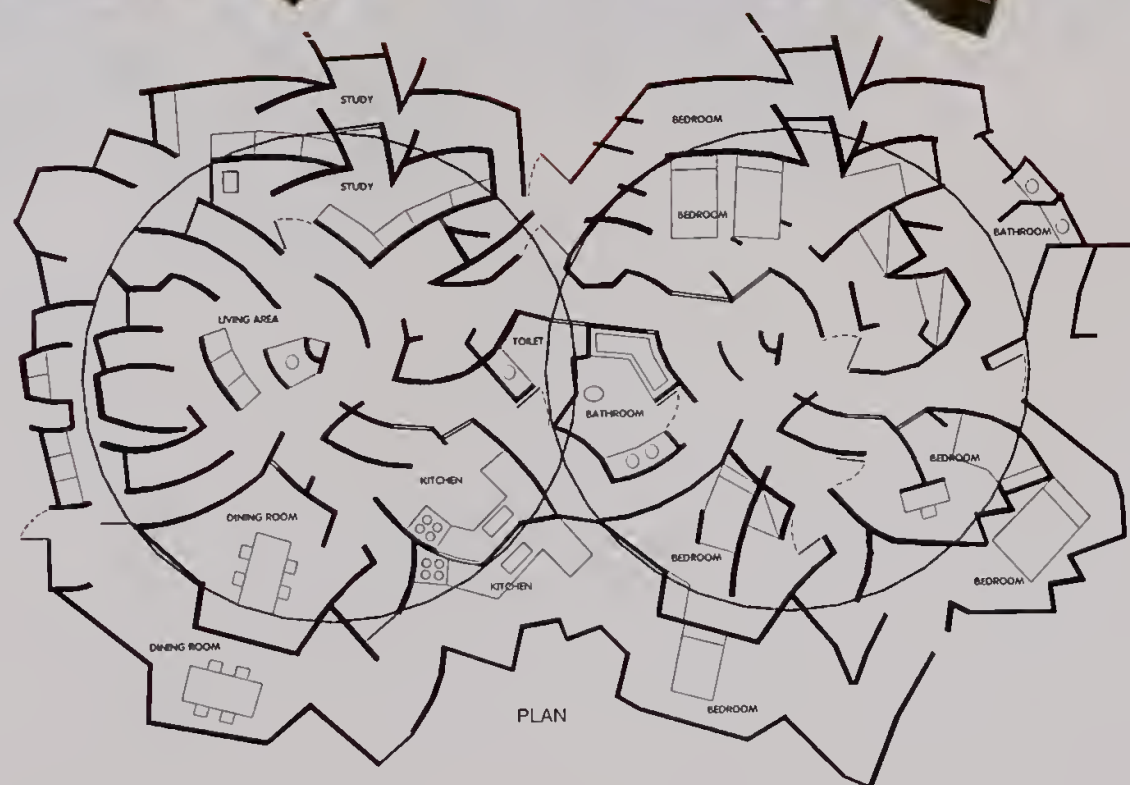


Study for labyrinth segments of upper level, **Critical Resemblances House**



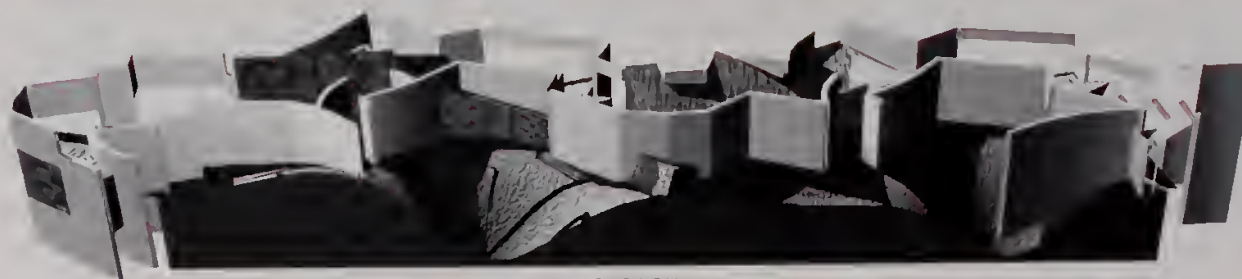
Study for labyrinth segments of lower level, **Critical Resemblances House**

ARCADE HOUSE

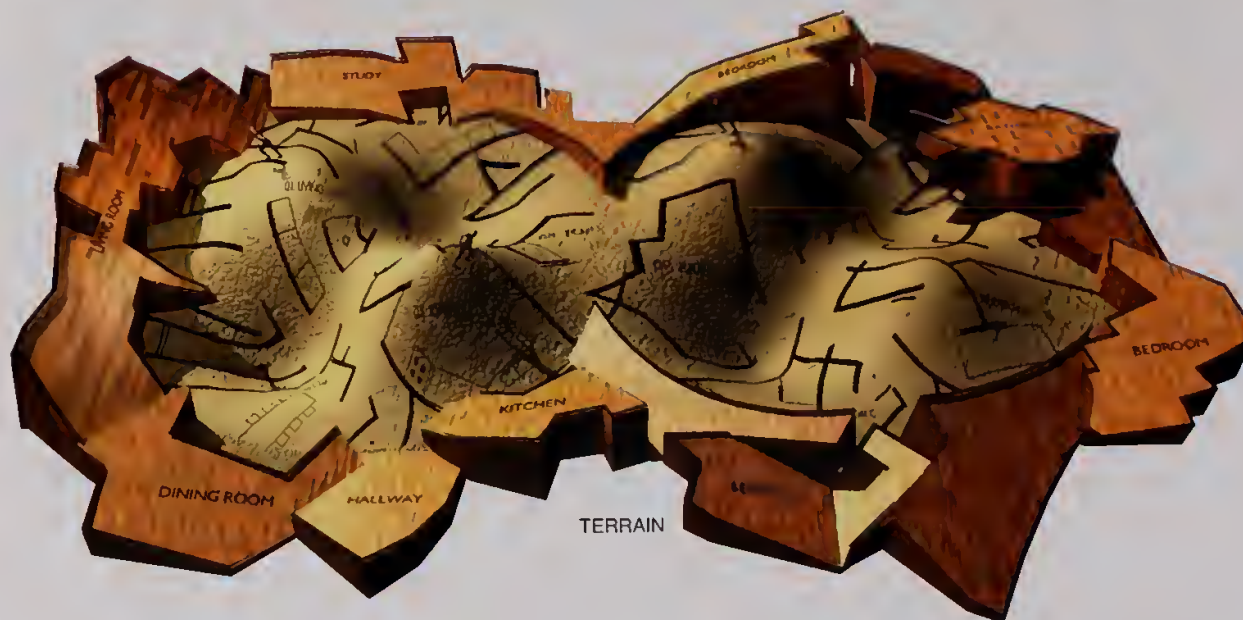




SECTION

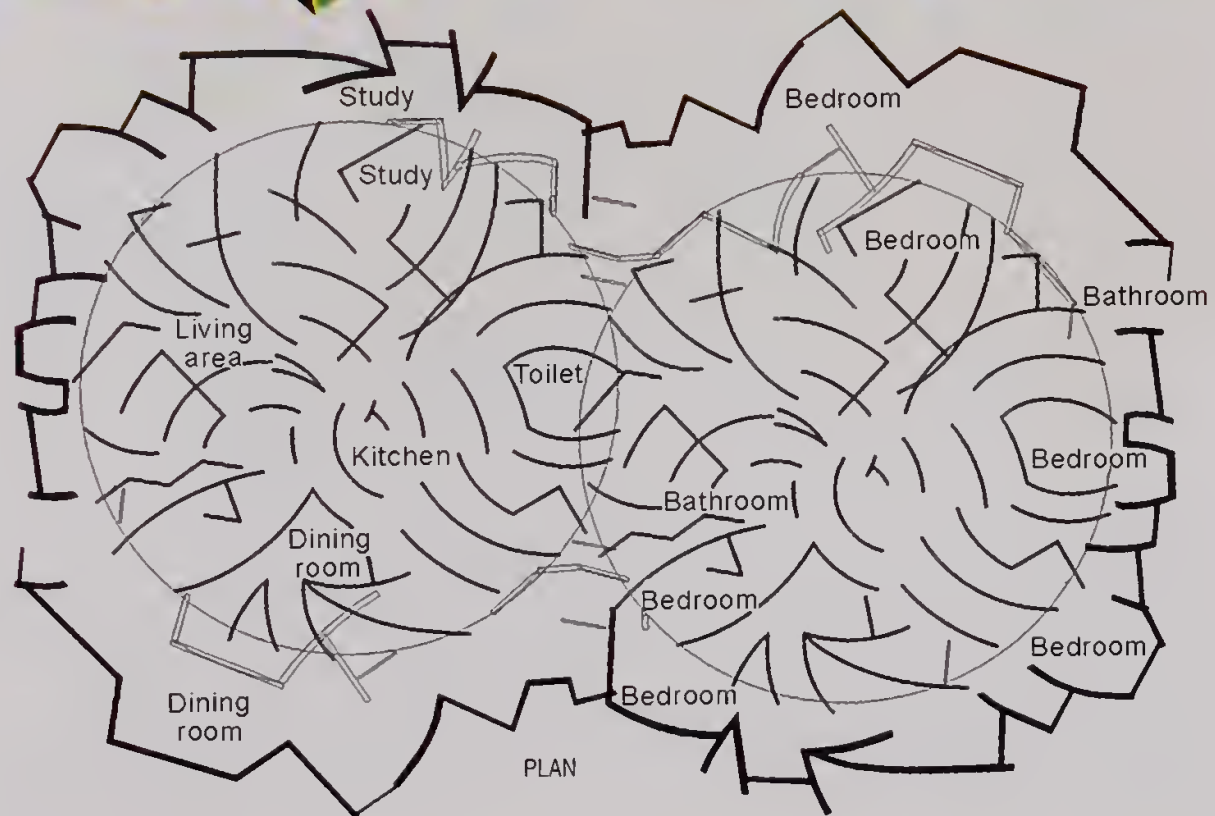
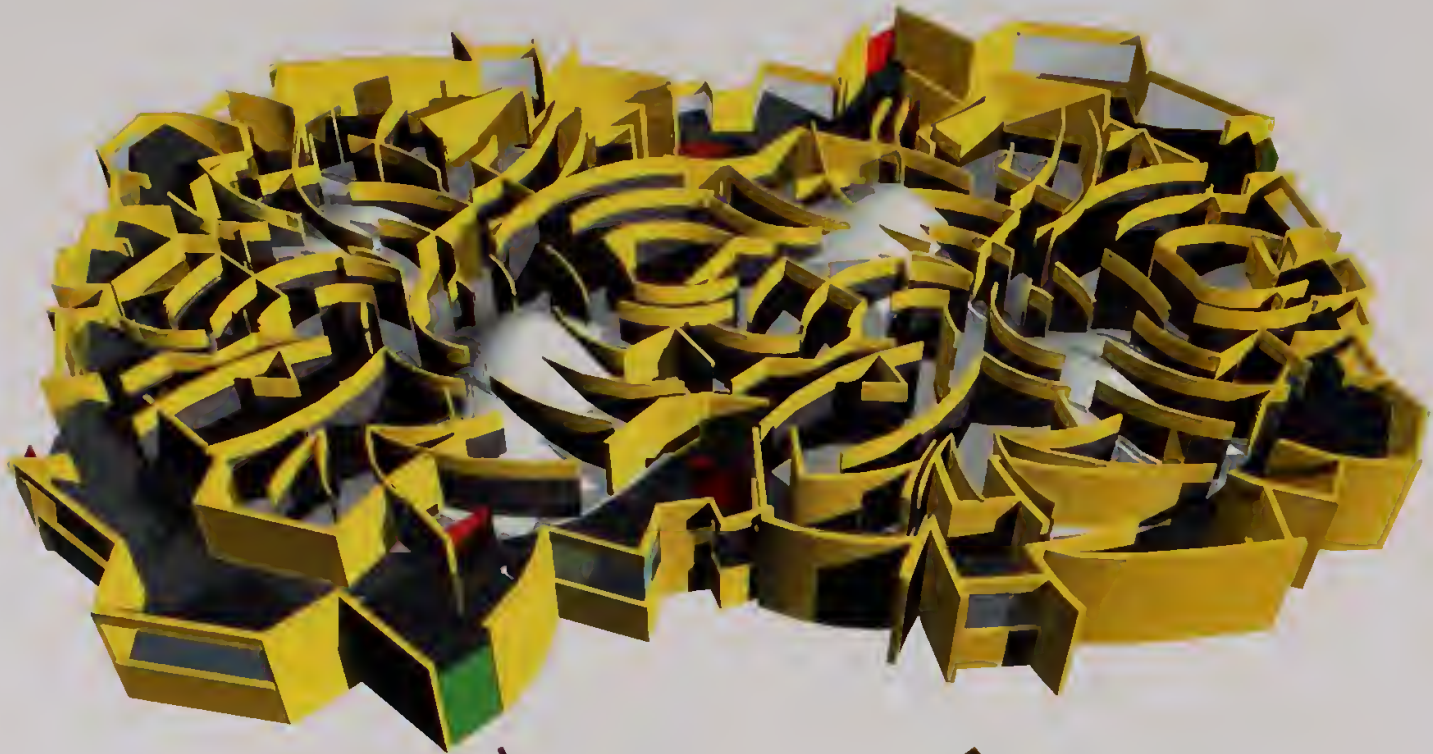


SECTION



The form of the ring-shaped arcade of the Arcade House is taken from a straightforward doubling of the exterior walls of an entirely different house, visible in plan within it. The house can be read either as a mere shadow of its former self, with its interior in ruins, or as a mere outline of a would-be self, with no interior in place yet. A survivor of evisceration gains a courtyard, while an incomplete effort serves up a provisional courtyard. Residents live on the periphery of where they might have lived. Nothing will be allowed to stand on its own. It will not be possible to take an unambiguous step.

INFLECTED ARCADE HOUSE

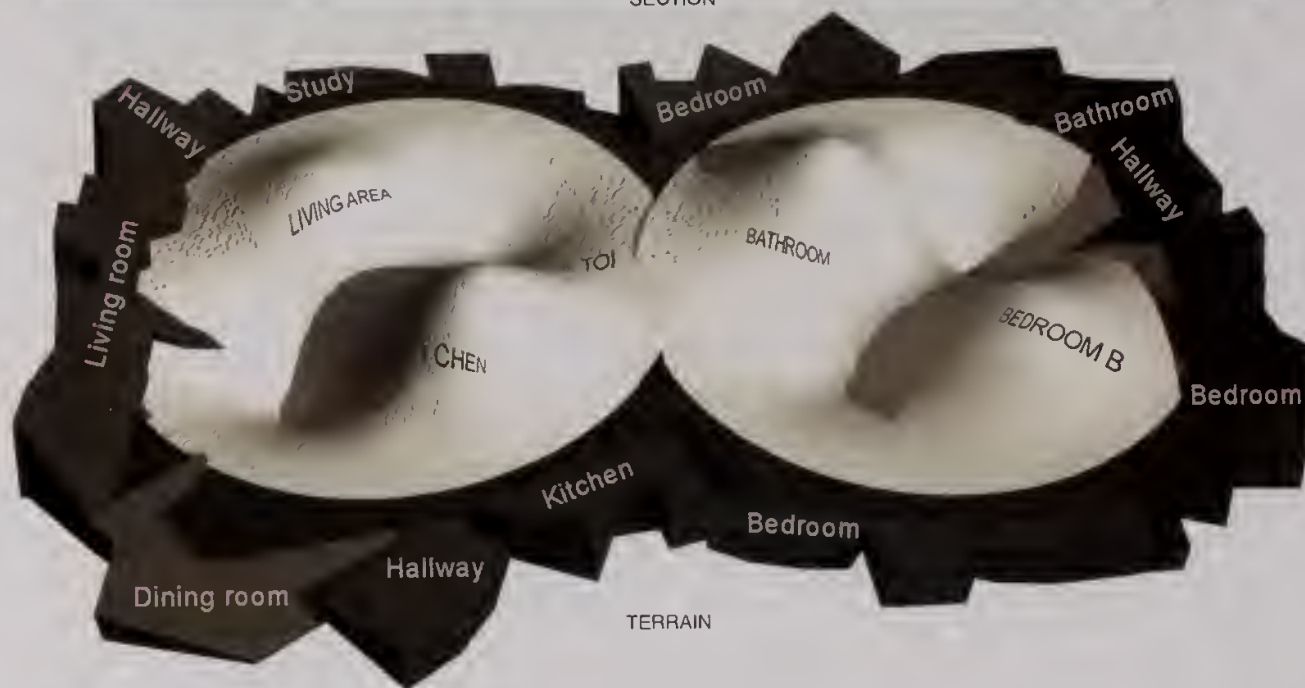




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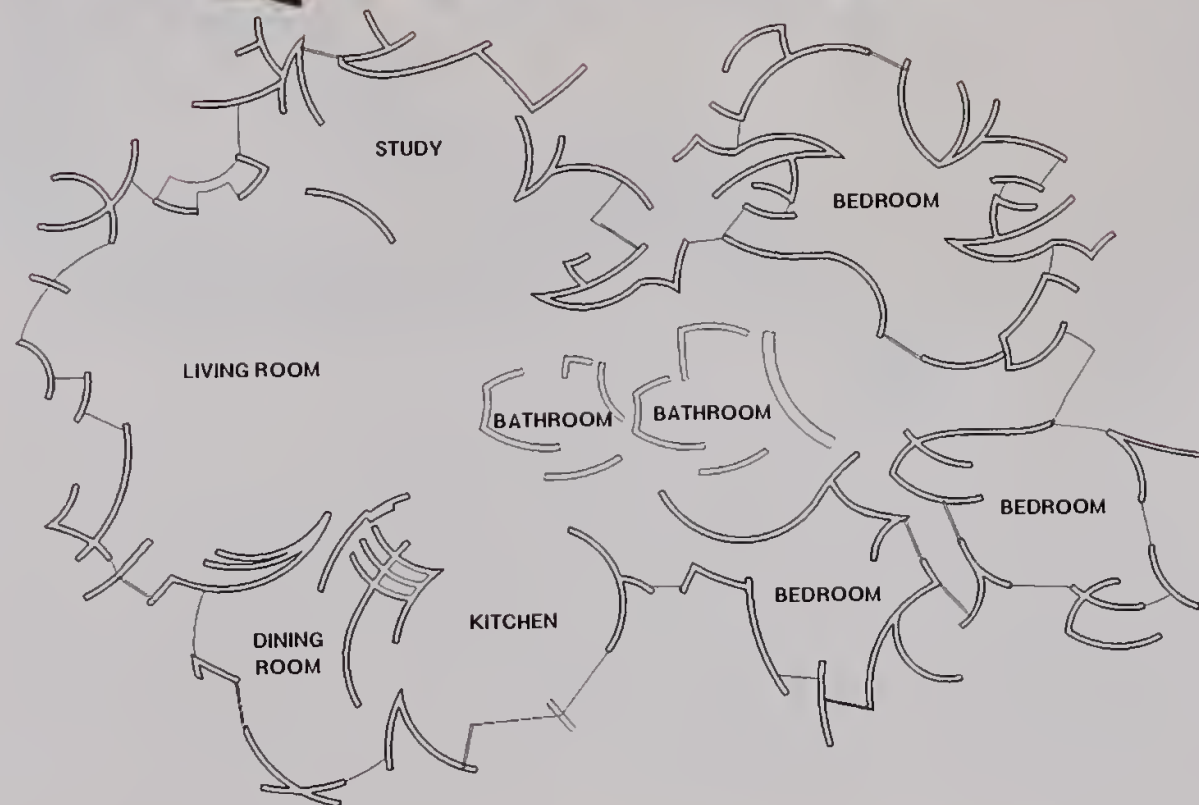
SECTION



TERRAIN

The Inflected Arcade House results when the Arcade House joins forces with its architectural progenitor, the Critical Resemblances House, from whose footprint its form derives and whose terrain and plan serve as its courtyard. Simply by noting the predominant color in her view, a resident knows where within a labyrinth segment her gaze has come to rest. Passing back and forth from minutely articulated areas to significantly less inflected regions, moving through parts of the house that exist in contradistinction and that exhibit two distinct approaches under one roof, residents flex fields or sites of action and sensibility, palpating the reaches of their architectural bodies, which are more palpably in tow than ever before.

INFANCY HOUSE

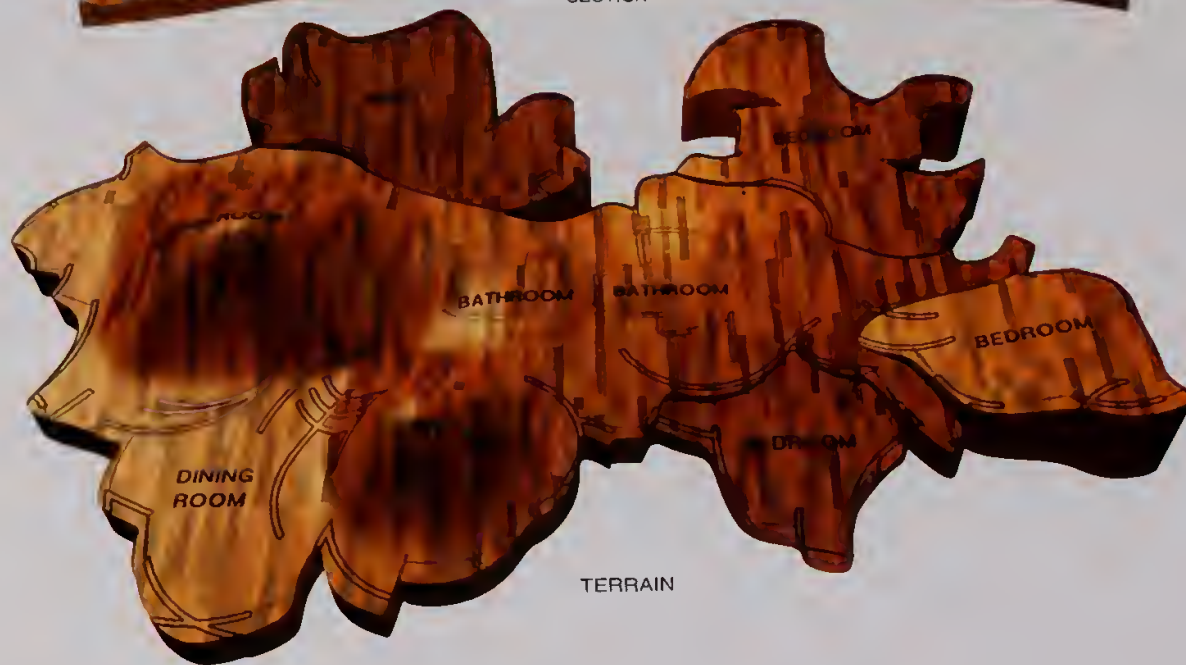




ELEVATION



SECTION

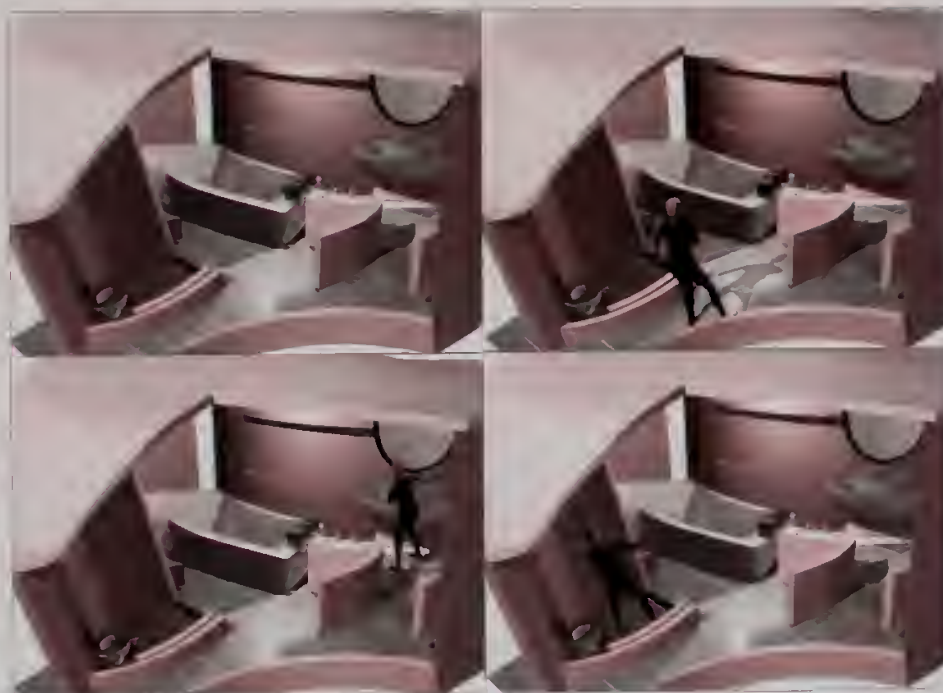


TERRAIN

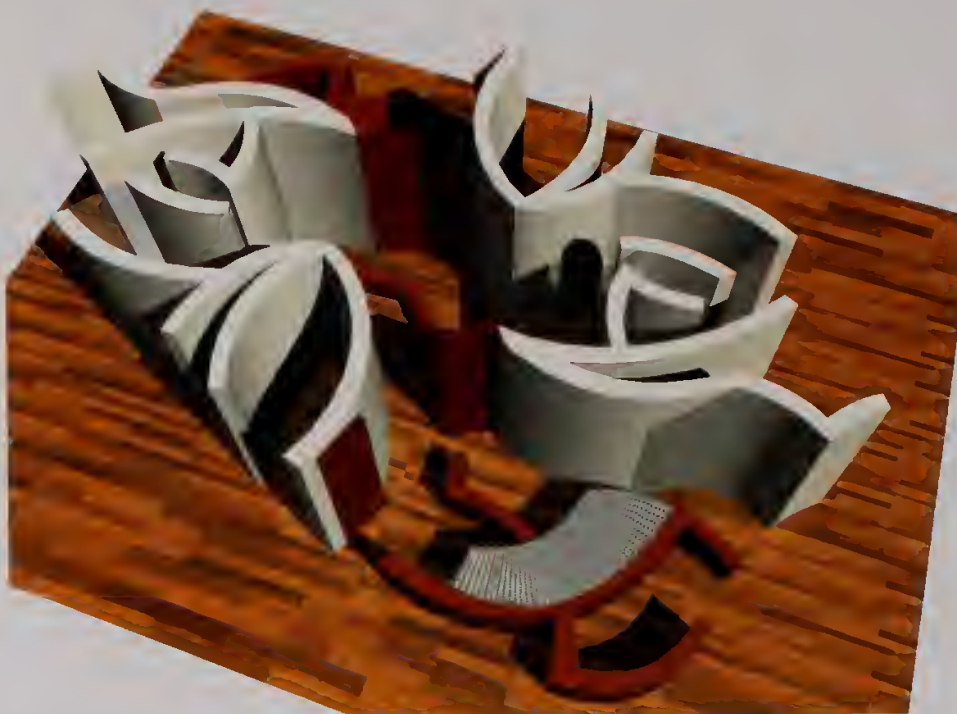
The Infancy House is the Critical Resemblances House minus interior-defining labyrinth segments. Moving through a passageway that prefigures the dining room by mimicking its features, a resident can get the sense of entering the room even before setting foot into it. Bathrooms that exist on three distinct scales at once remain, appropriately enough, tentative and unresolved. Curved walls that lead ever elsewhere and make it difficult to know where to come to rest help strip residents of the dwelling habit. Residents embrace infancy as an openness to everything. Each resident repeatedly throws herself into the arms of her own infancy--an infant once again.



Study for Bathroom A, Infancy House



Study for Bathroom B, Infancy House

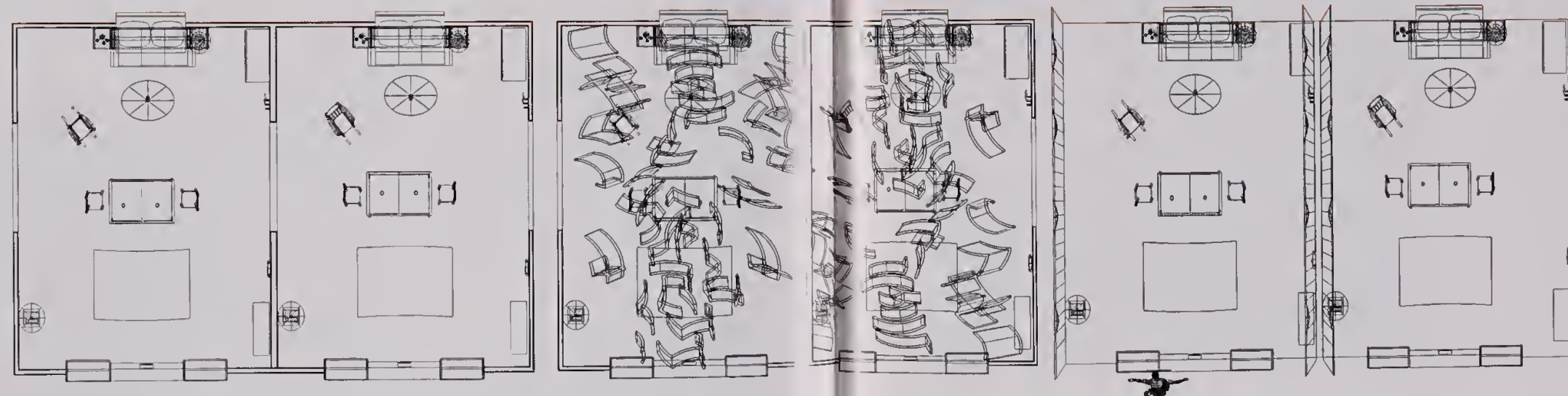


Study for **Bedroom, Infancy House**



Study for **Dining Room, Infancy House**

TWIN HOUSE



Next to every room or every set of rooms is a twin with identical layout but oppositely pitched terrain. Having succeeded in becoming familiar with one room, a resident need only transfer that feeling of familiarity to its twin. The meted-out program of the architectural web along half the length of the house anticipates shapes that will be assumed

and positions that will be taken by residents when they step into the other half. What happens in the course of a day in one room may be acted out at any number of chosen intervals, in a manner of instant replay, in its twin. Occasions that can be given instant bodily replay cease to appear unique.

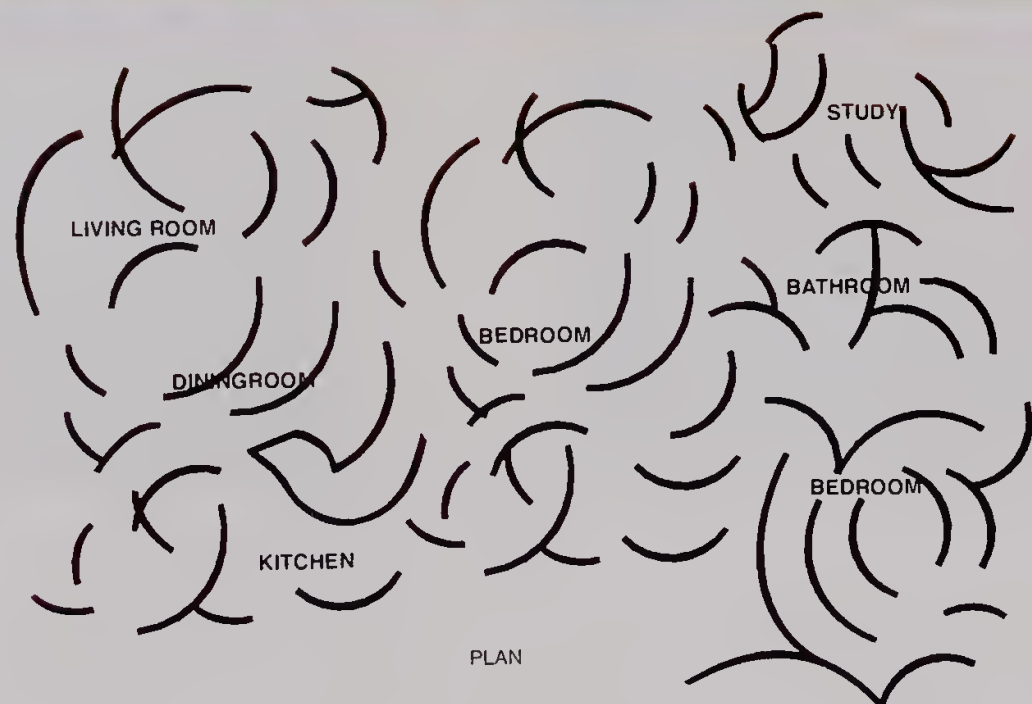
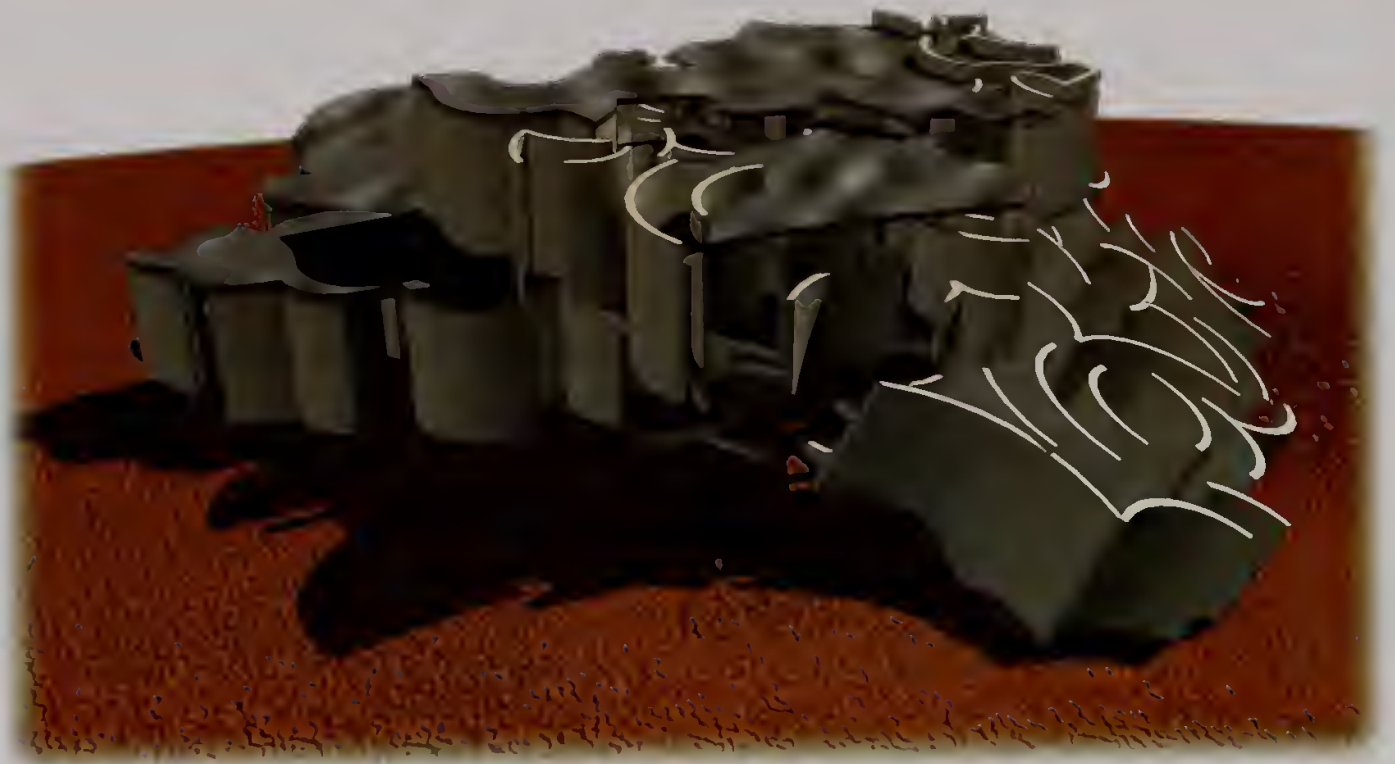


Study for Room A, Twin House



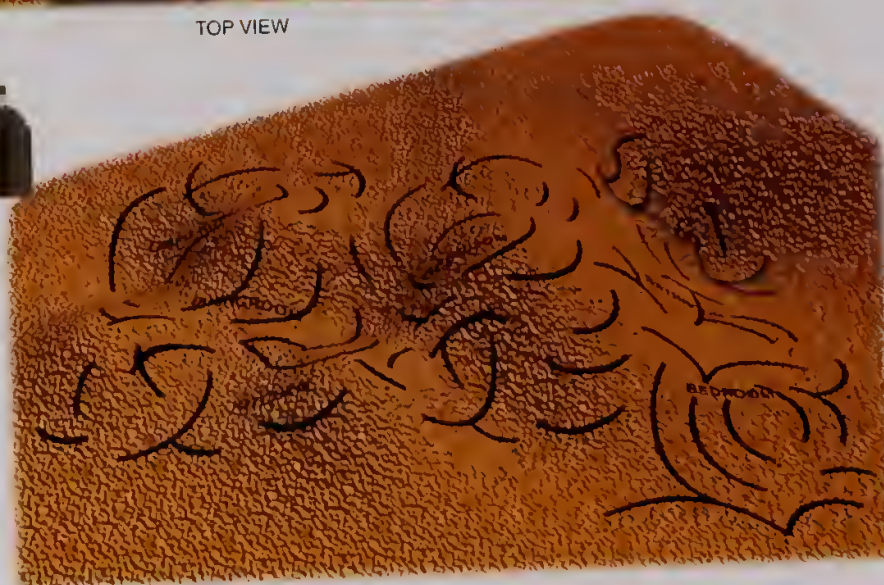
Study for Room B, Twin House

CLEAVING WAVE HOUSE



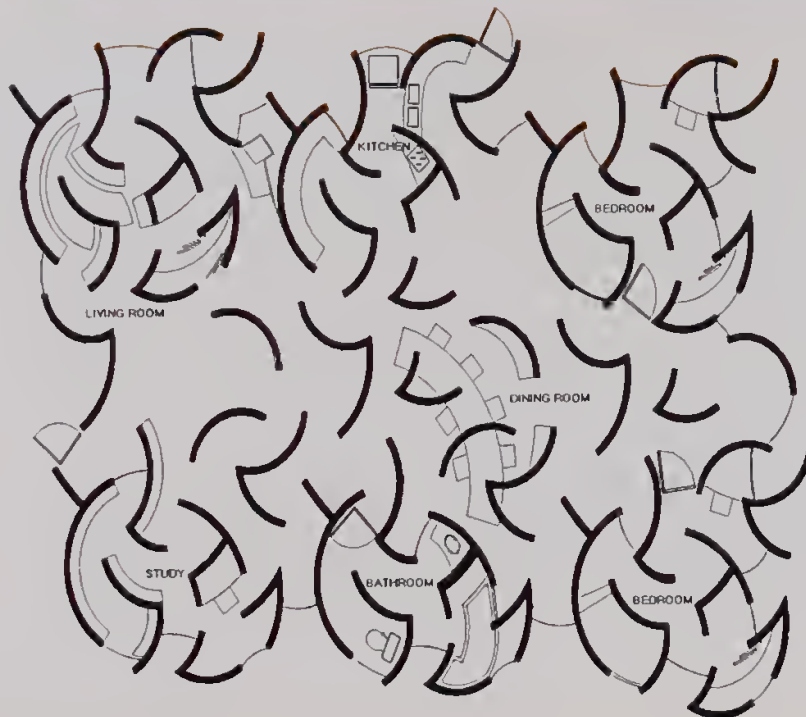


TOP VIEW



Like all dual-labyrinth houses, this house is configured to demarcate the fanning out of the architectural body. Muscles heed wall placement and take shape in relation to it. As a resident's body finds its balance and holds itself in place, it clamps thoughts and feelings malleably--neuromuscularly--into place. Edging past patterned wall-segments that elicit complex and unusual bodily articulations, residents continually recast their percipient selves as architectural bodies. The architectural body, taking up residence as mind, tests the limits of plasticity. Even parts of the house located within a steep drop in the terrain, parts that lead to where residents cannot follow, and so are uninhabitable, can still be entered on some basis.

ITERATION HOUSE



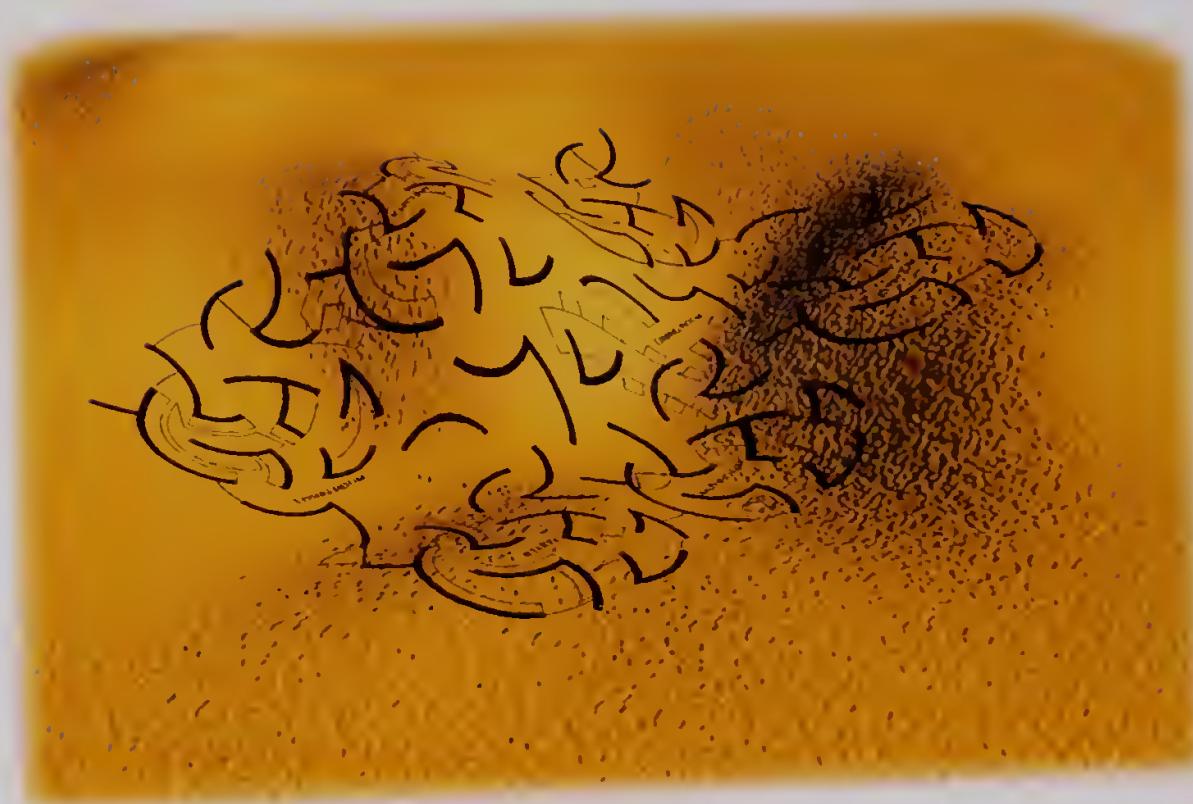
Only one set of patterned wall-segments constrains bodily movements throughout this house. The same set of questions can be asked repeatedly from different angles. How does the body--the body-person--hold what it holds in response to how it is positioned? What is it to be a body? A body-person? A body-person in action? An architectural body? What is it not to live and die, but to live and live?



ELEVATION

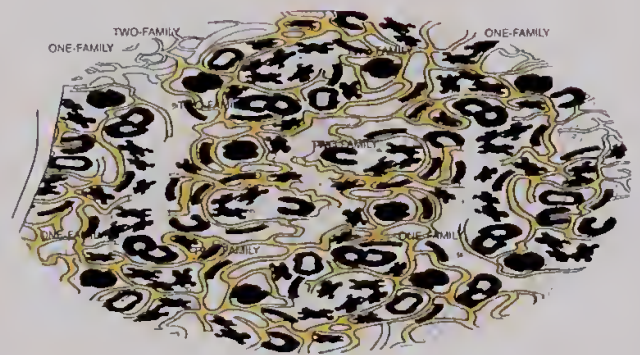


SECTION



TERRAIN

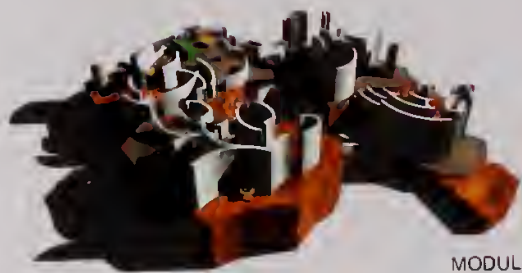
MODULAR LABYRINTH HOUSE



CITY PLAN



TWO-FAMILY HOUSING



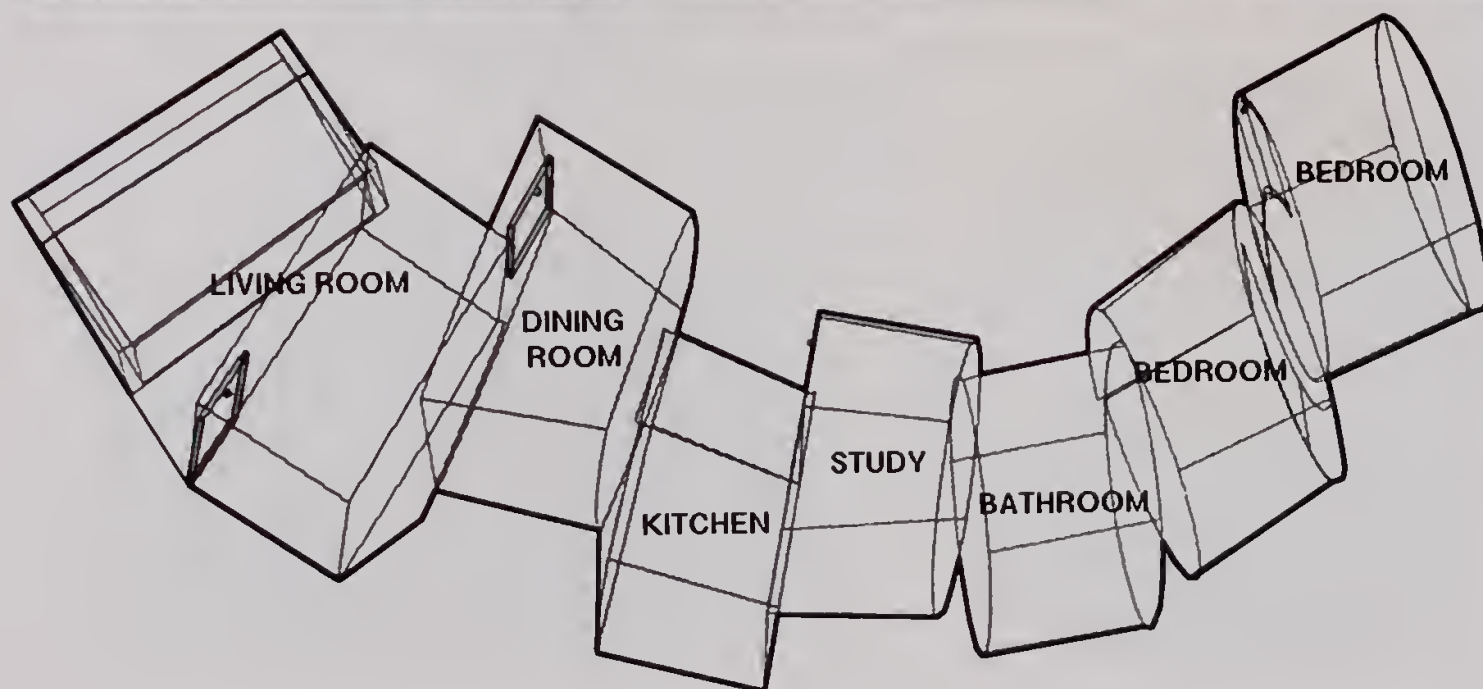
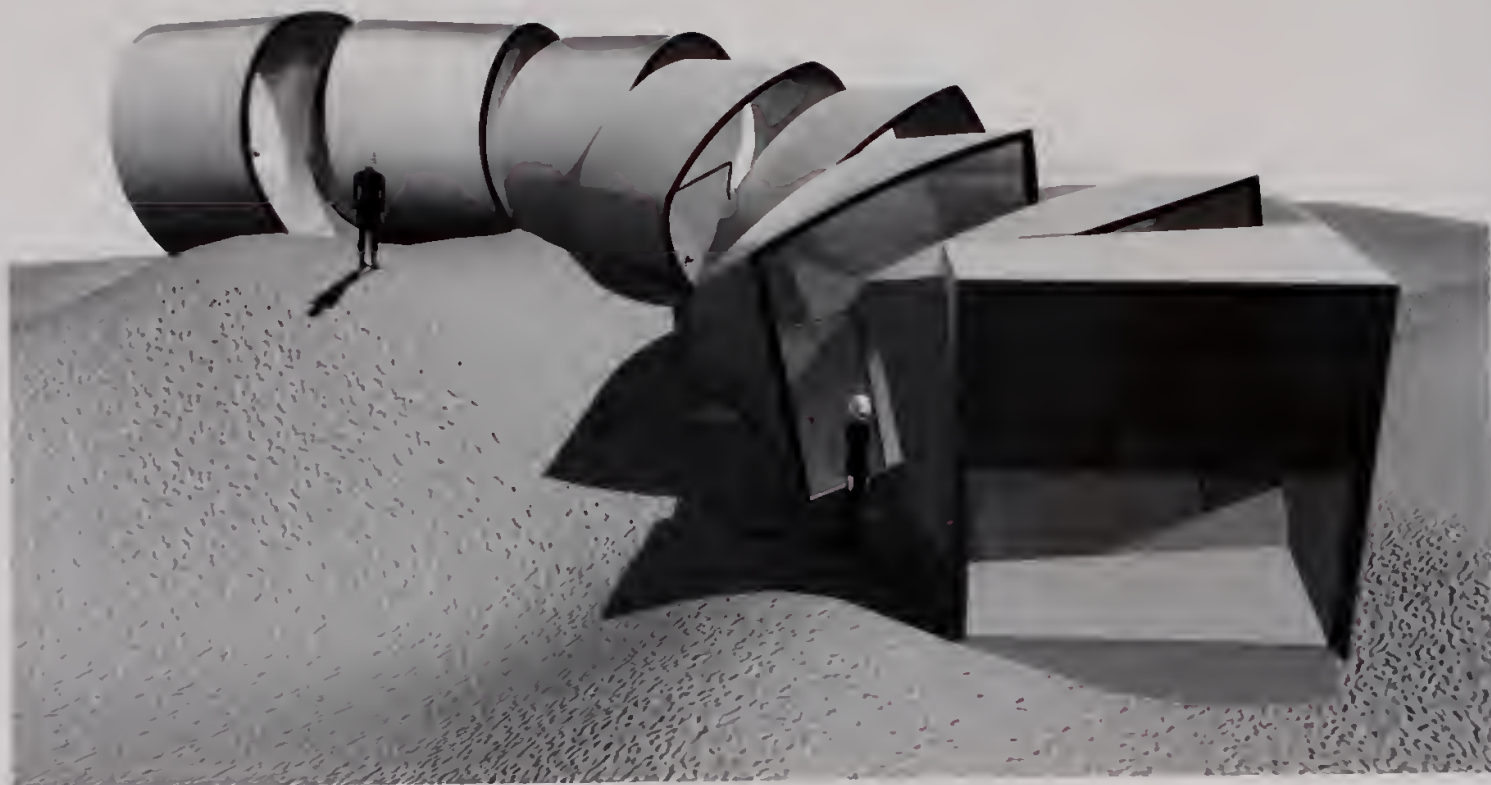
MODULE A

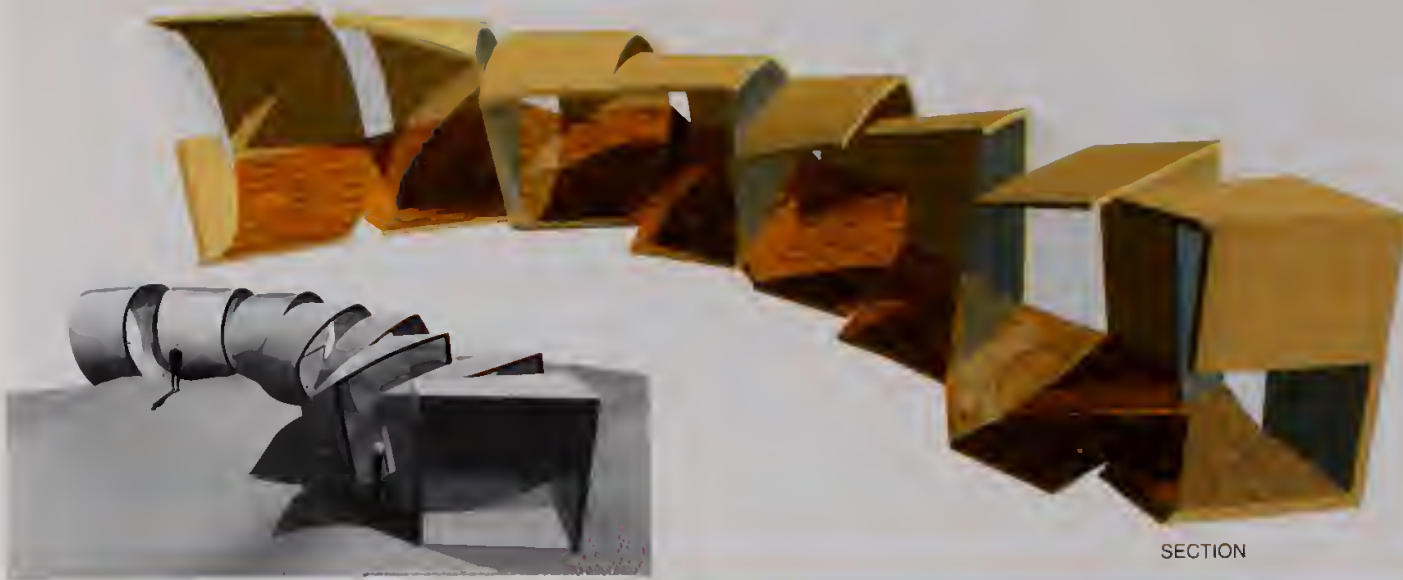


MODULE B

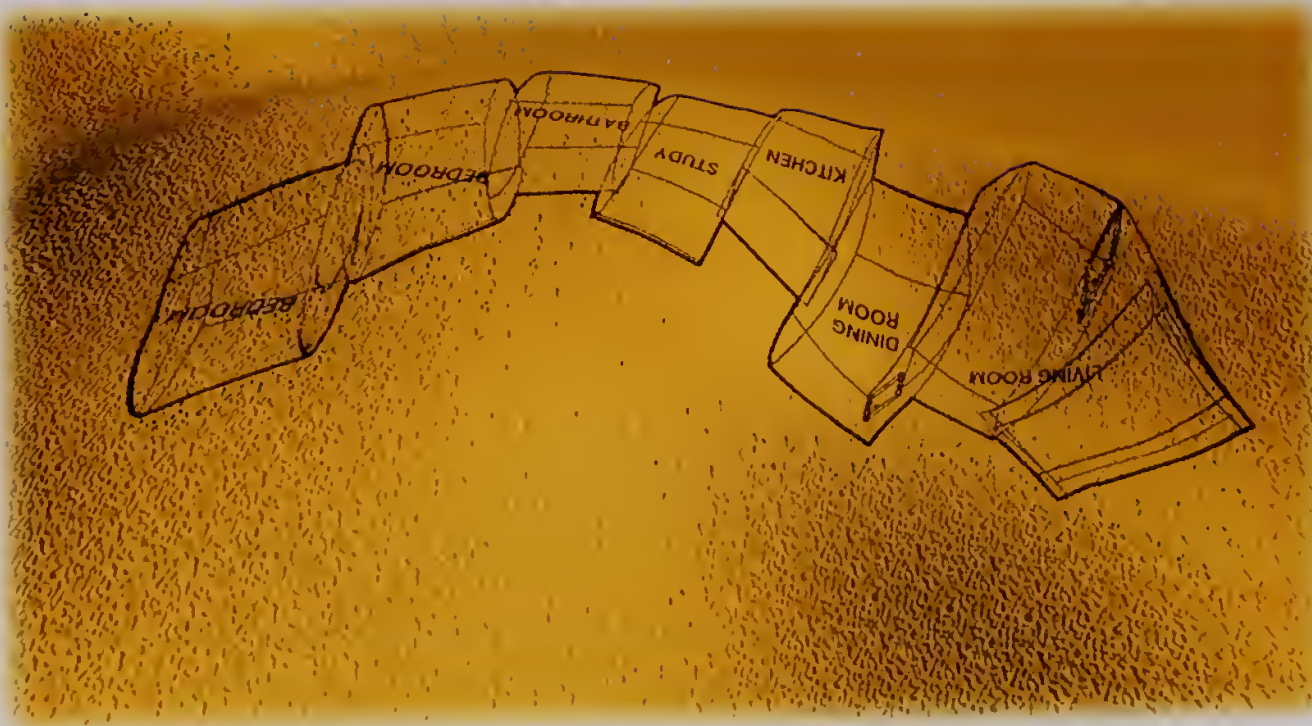
When this house is used as a two-family dwelling, guiding forms of the units (modules) direct the two families' lives along the same paths of action, but in opposite directions. Families live and work in tandem, utilizing events that the module engenders in the lives of their close neighbors to elucidate their own experiences. When the house is used as a one-family dwelling, residents may choose to keep the two modules as "identical" twins and quite strictly separated, living now in one direction within one of the modules, now in another direction in the other module, constantly performing about-faces on their own living habits. Or they may simply assign different room-types to identical guiding forms and move freely between modules.

MORPHED TWIST HOUSE





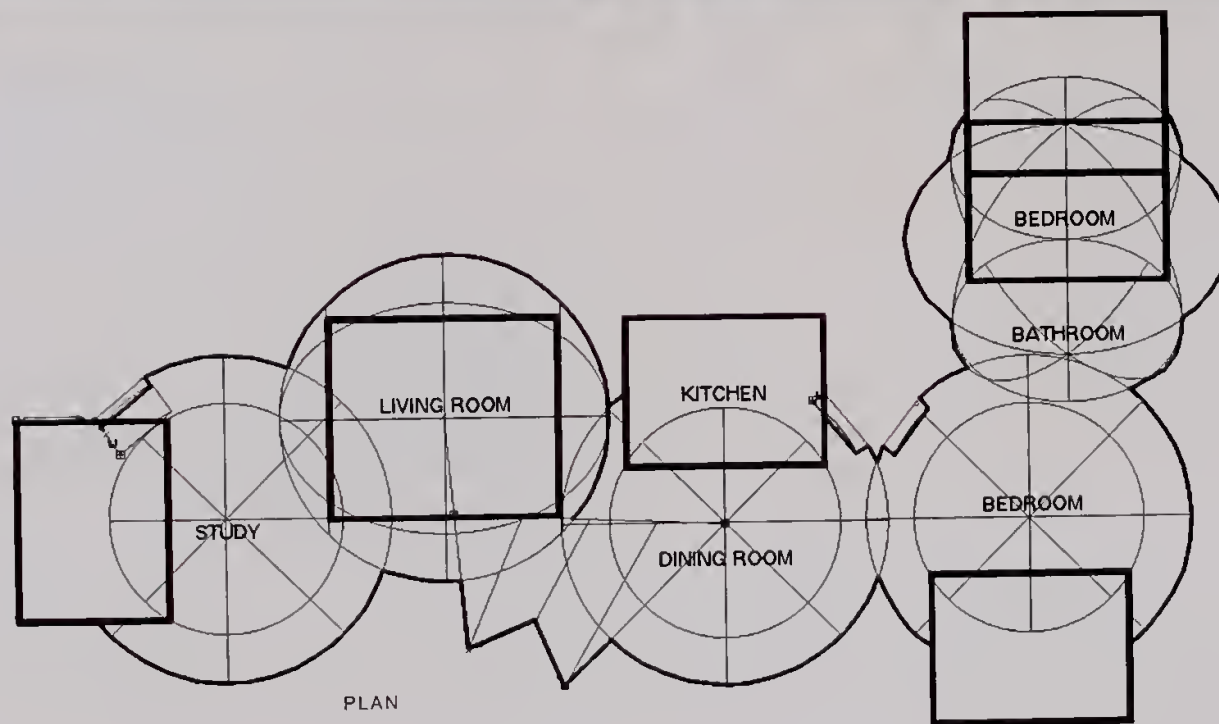
SECTION



TERRAIN

Residents propose their own originating and target shapes for morphing and choose the degree of twist. The morphed twist, which rules the terrain and insinuates itself into all movement occurring within the house, takes up residence within those residing within it. Residents know bodily every twist and turn of where they live.

ROTATION HOUSE





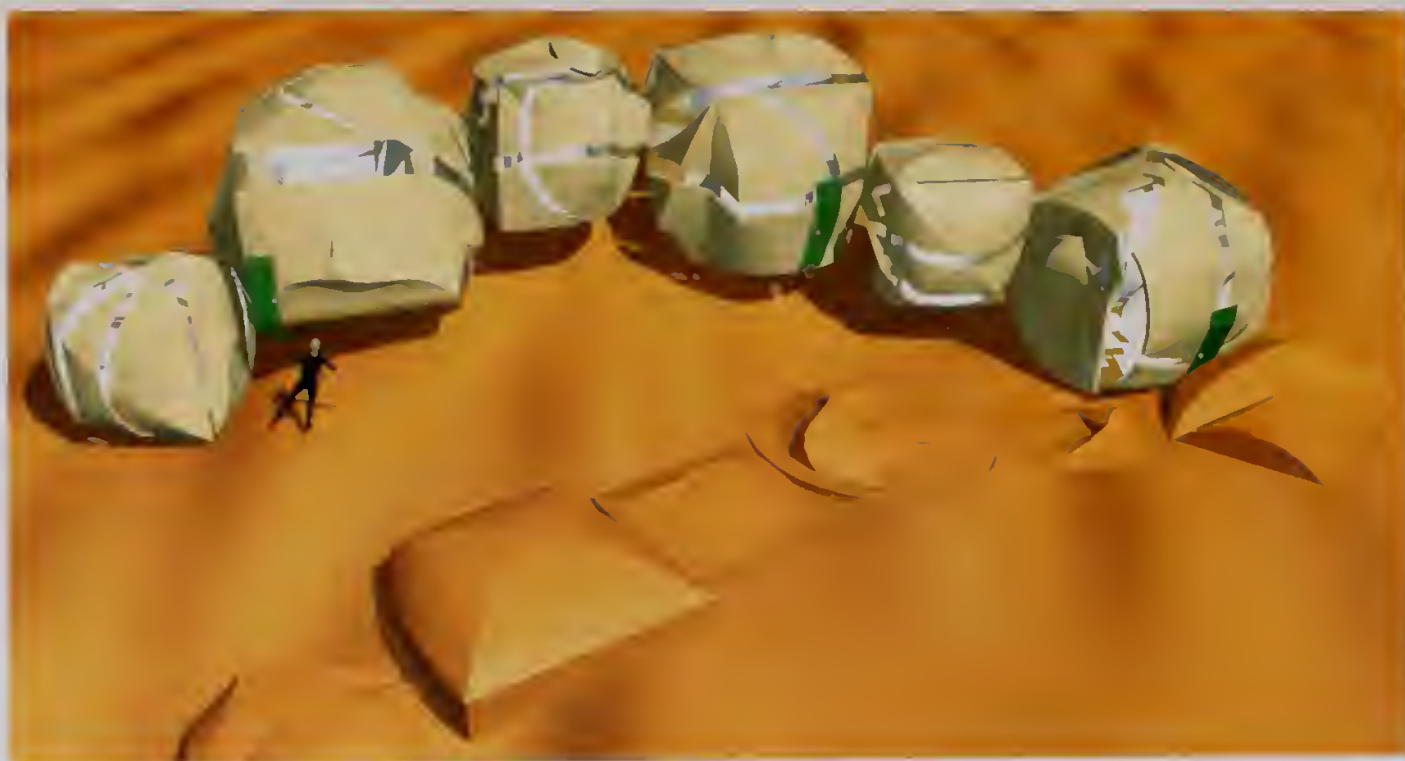
SECTION

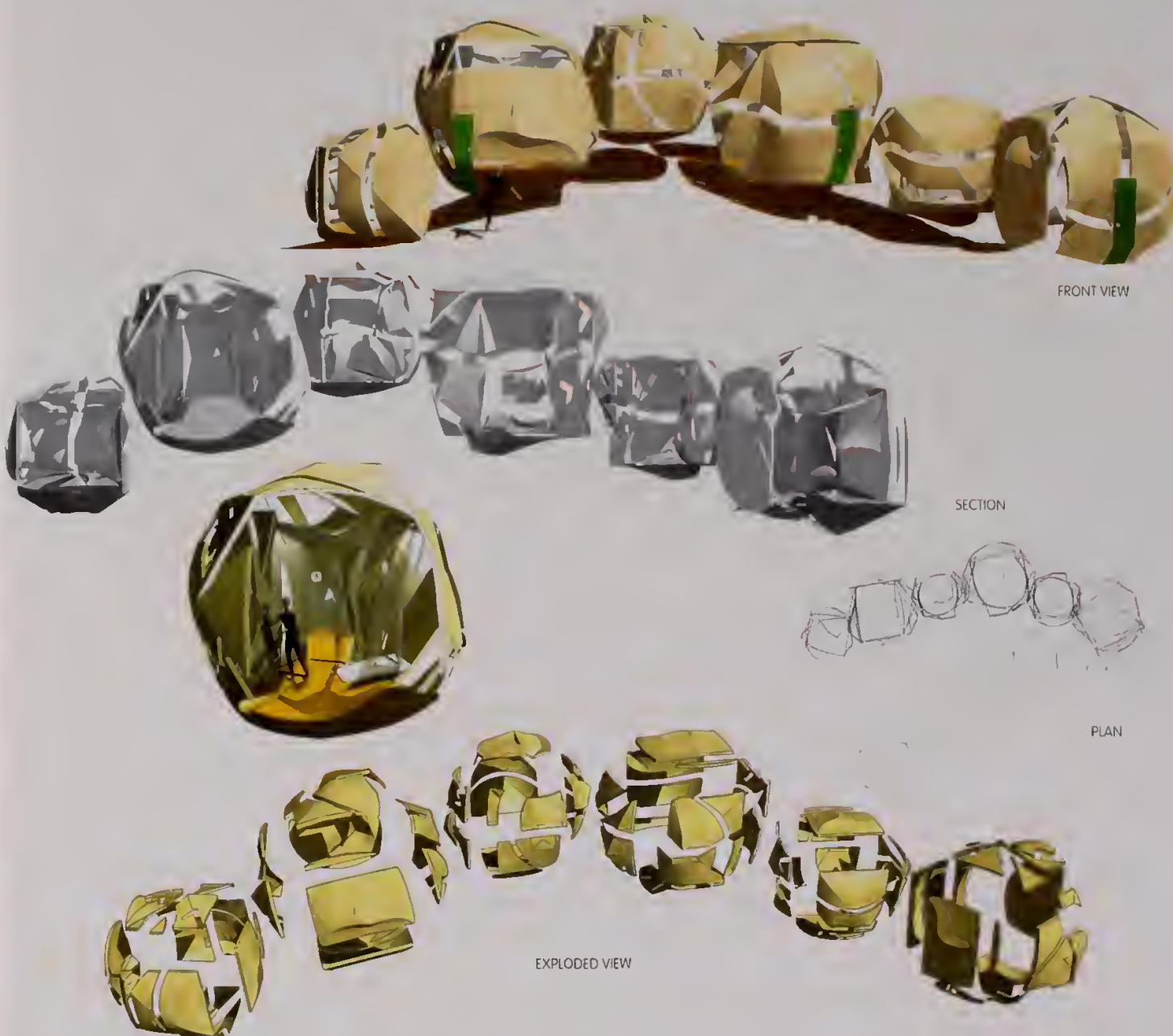


TERRAIN

Five rotations of a room become a house. Overall size and form hold constant, except for changes in features due to the different room-types. Walkable area and consequently total available "living space" vary greatly with rotation, making the rooms appear to be different sizes even though each is the same size. Rooms act as spatial anagrams. In each room of the house, residents find themselves repeatedly being struck by where within it, where within this rotation in particular, this version of the room-module, various nooks, crannies, curves, and angular surfaces are to be found. They are further struck by how the same features appear different or remain to some degree the same from one rotated version of the room to another. This continual series of assessments and comparisons naturally brings about in residents a greater degree of alertness and a far sharper than ordinary sense of the architectural surround.

INFANCY HOUSE -- LIGHT CHAOS





Distinctly shaped double-sided facets match the interior of the house with its exterior. Despite the fact that the basic-generative form presents the same set of shapes and proportions no matter what the angle of rotation, the variously angled interiors cannot be easily recognized as essentially the same. Cuts for windows, passageways, and doors encircle each room, slicing through the facets but preserving their shapes. Haphazard incisions of light steer the formation of shapes in unexpected directions.

SINGLE-SIDED



Looking at a facet (wall) of a room, one attempts to remember where this particular facet is positioned in the other rooms, and, as each room is evoked, the body remembers the demands made by its terrain.

DOUBLE-SIDED

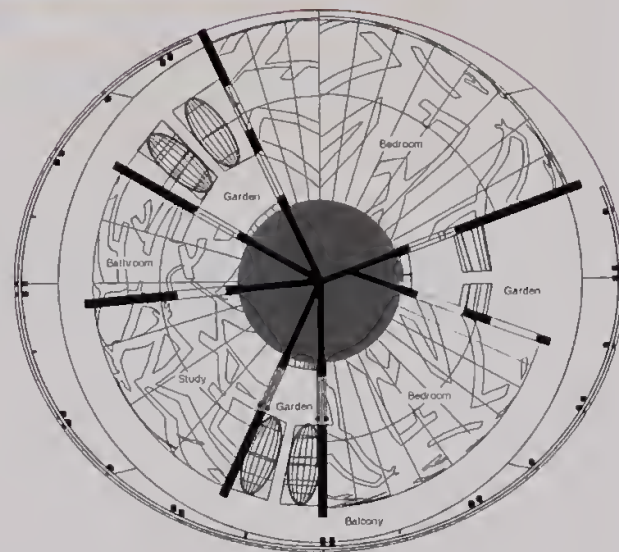
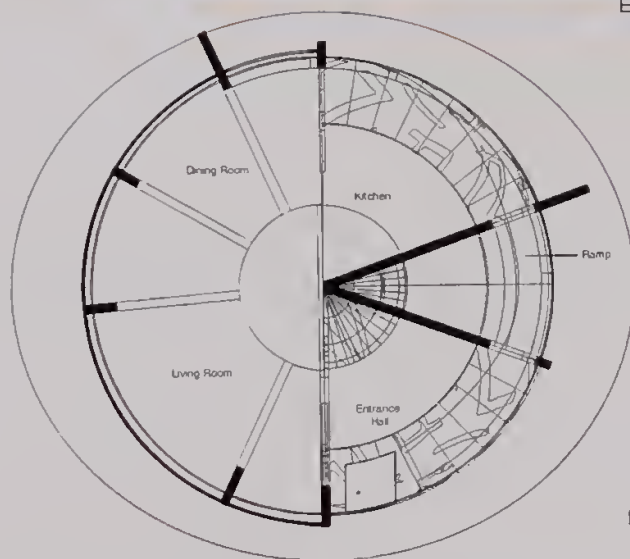


Although overall shape of interior does not vary during rotation, each rotation of the unit yields an interior with a unique subjective feel.

GRAVITATIONAL ETHICS HOUSE

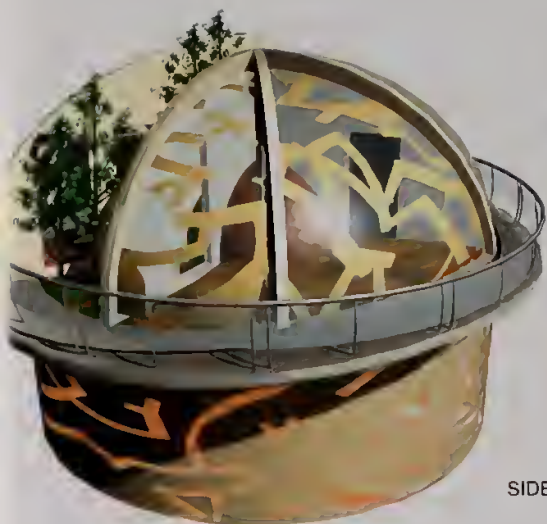


ENTRANCE



PLANS

Having subsisted for several millennia merely as supporting ground for houses, finally the planet enters a house and takes up residence within it.



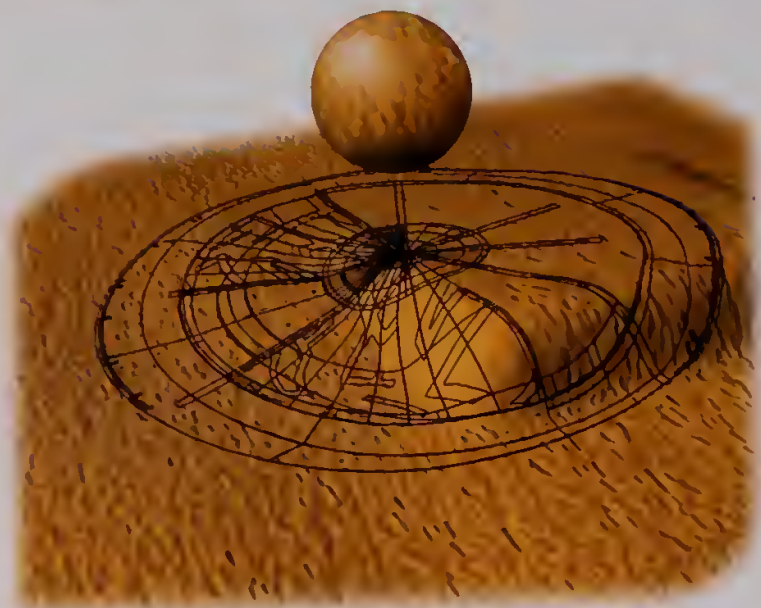
SIDE VIEW



SECTION

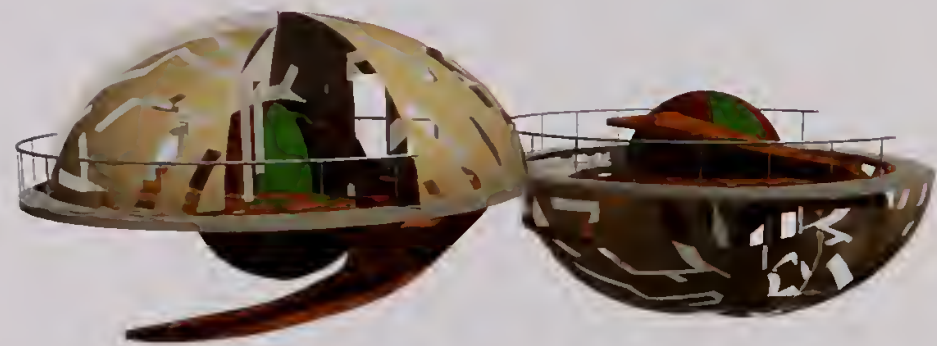


TOP VIEW



TERRAIN

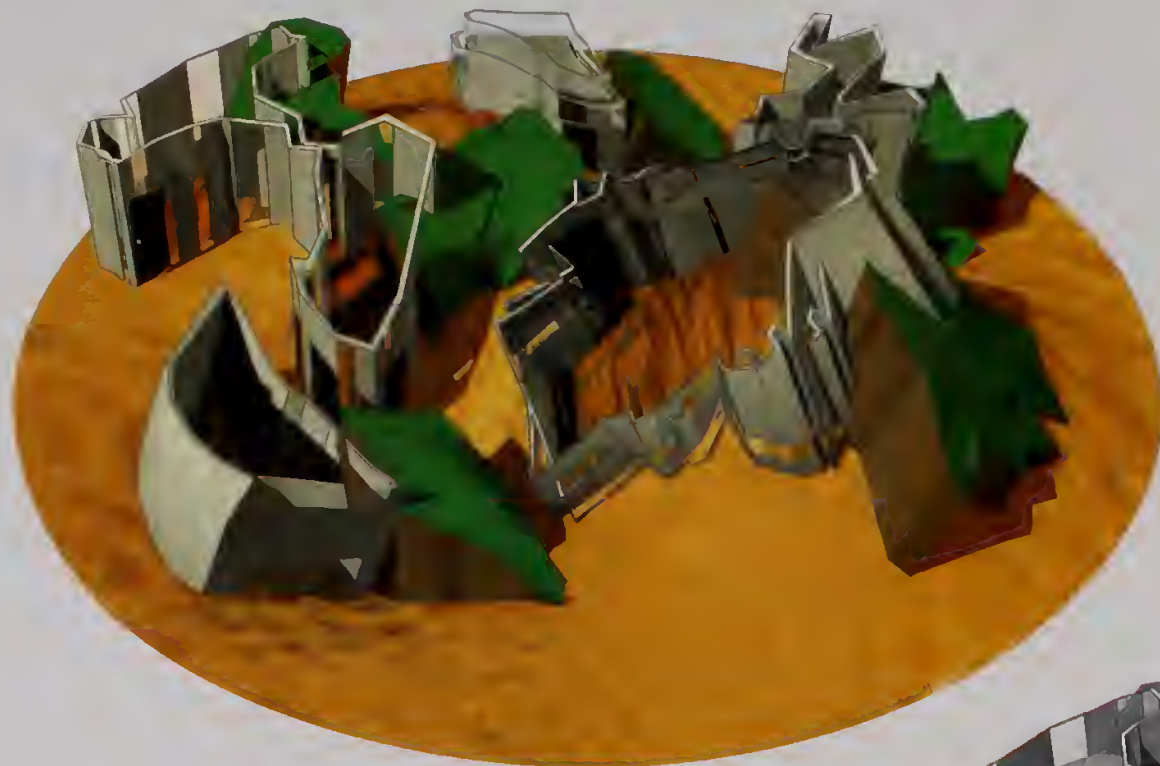
Once the planet--in the form of a continuous object that surfaces discontinuously, appearing at different angles and in different guises (now terrain, now wall, now ceiling) from room to room--noticeably obtrudes on all movements and anticipations of movement, ethical position at last can begin to be assessed with some accuracy.



above
Studies for a multiple dwelling based on
Gravitational Ethics House

right
Close-up of **Gravitational Ethics House**

AMORPHOUS INTERPENETRATION HOUSE



Each room has a distinct amorphous shape of its own. Terrain-segments consist of unenterable, dummy versions of rooms. Residents continually bump into and butt up against cast renditions of inhabitable areas,



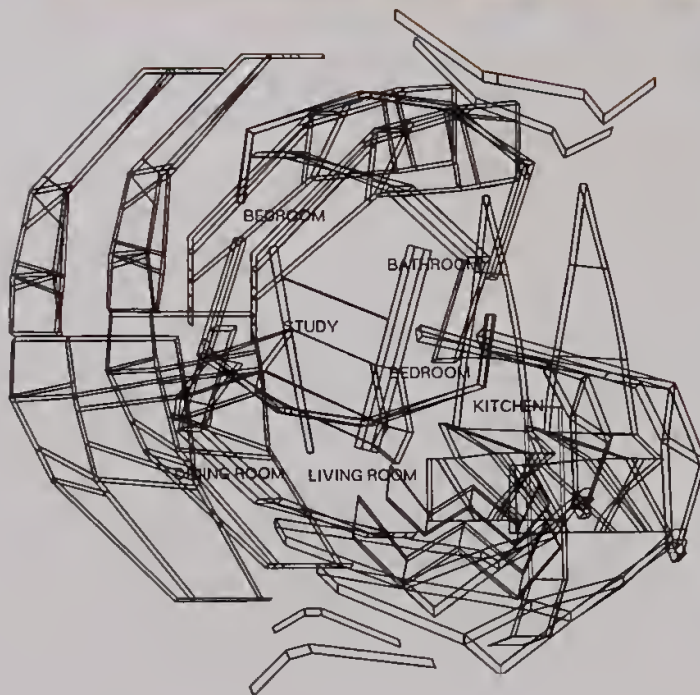
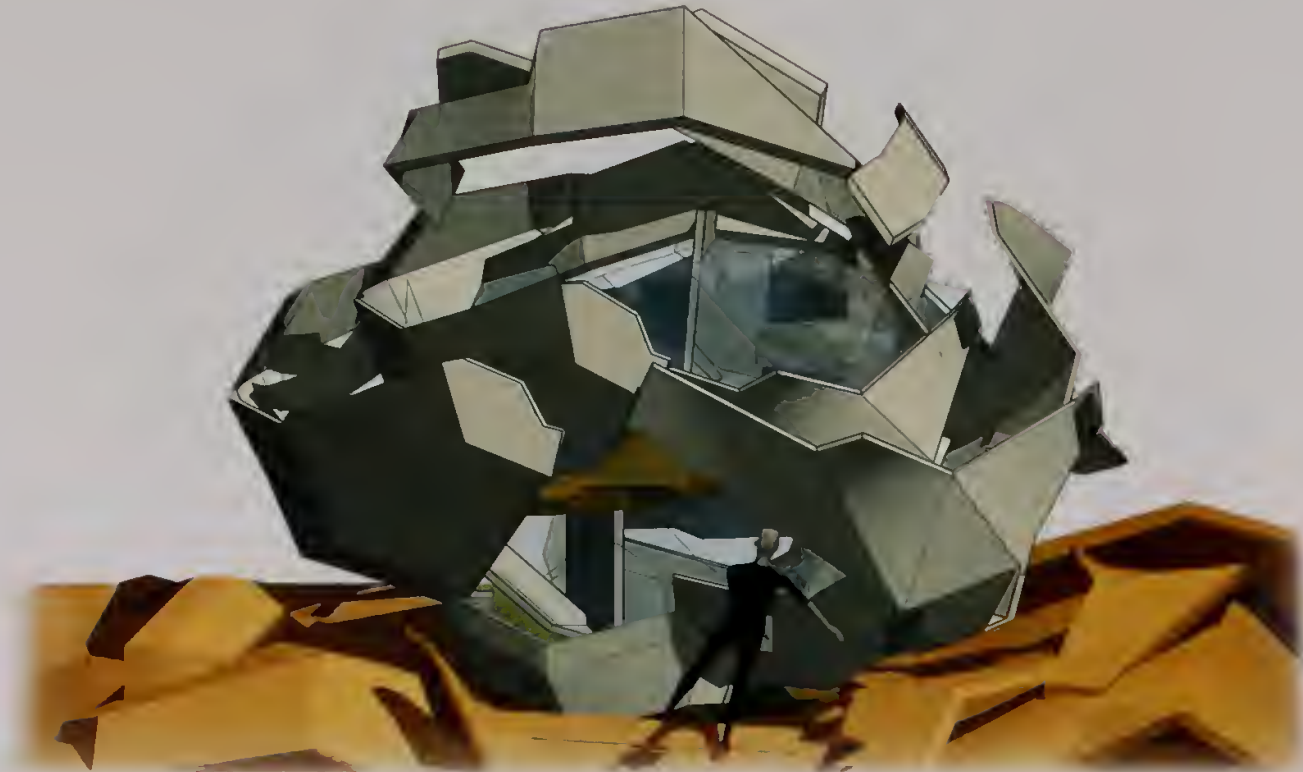
SECTION



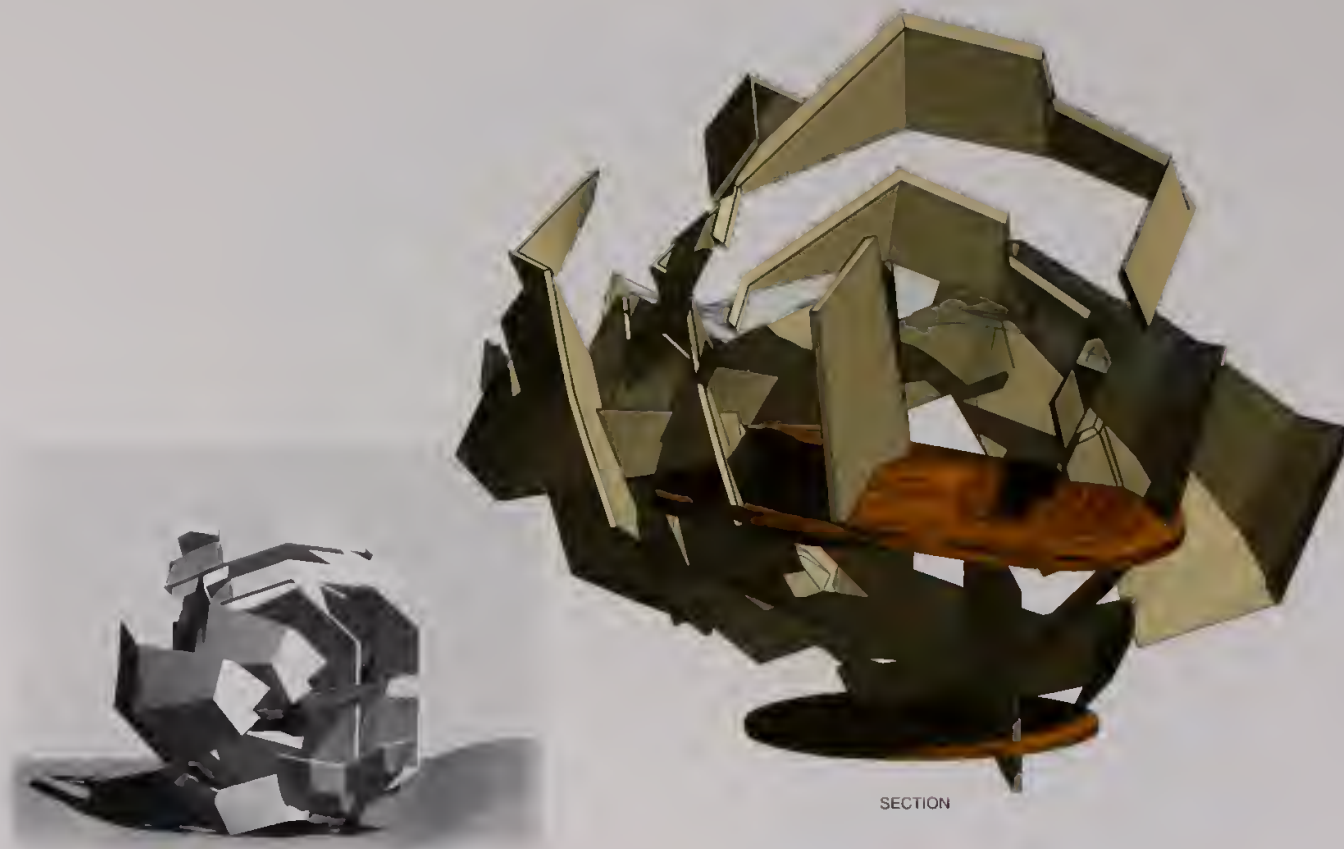
TERRAIN

upthrusting regions of non-house within the house. On the one hand, the architectural body finds that interpenetrating twin amorphous shapes--a hollow twin (a room) paired with a solid one (a terrain-segment)--thereby lose amorphousness: after all, a figure distinct enough to be copied cannot be all that shapeless. On the other hand, interpenetration results in fragmentation, and the architectural body finds itself coming upon more, not fewer, amorphous regions. Recognizing the waxing and waning of amorphousness to be directly related to how it wends its articulating way, the architectural body declares itself to be that which "mind" always was but never knew itself as.

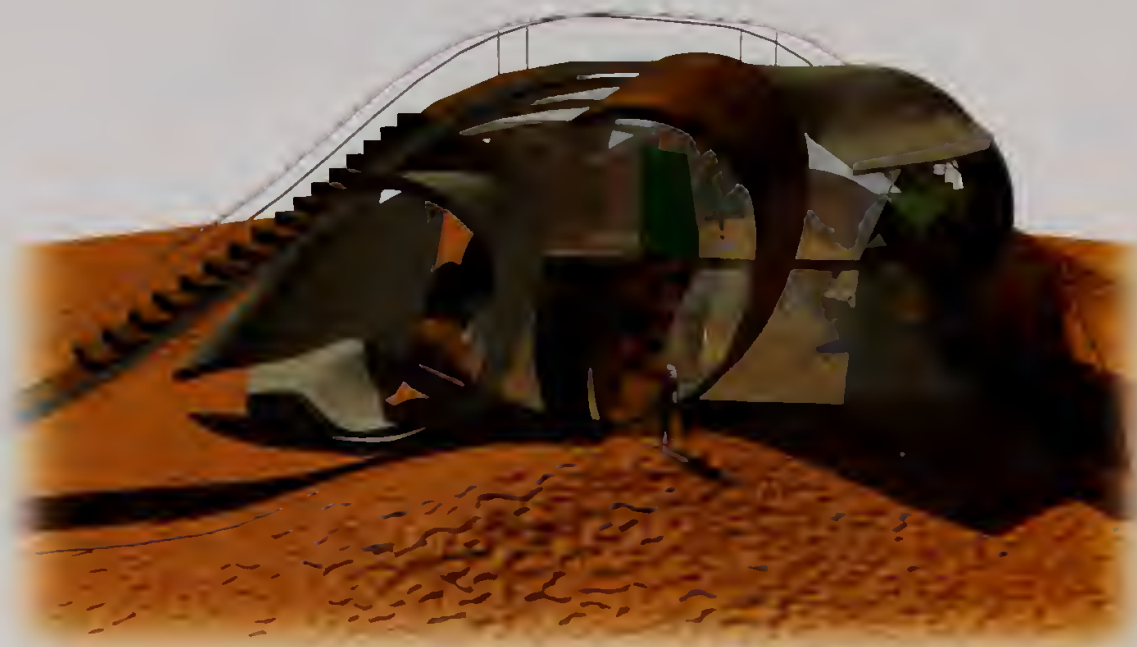
INDETERMINACY HOUSE



The house splits open and open, and the encasing of an active, architecturally projective body in a sheltering place becomes redefined. The house consists of two sets of five distinct regions of activity or zones of endeavor, each of which may encompass a number of rooms or only one. Residents can reflect upon and critique the areas through which they move by comparing them with their ever-viewable duplicates, always at only a slight remove. On the threshold of each set of duplicated areas, there will be, for residents and visitors alike, fructifying moments of overwhelming indecision as to which of the two fully twinned areas to enter.



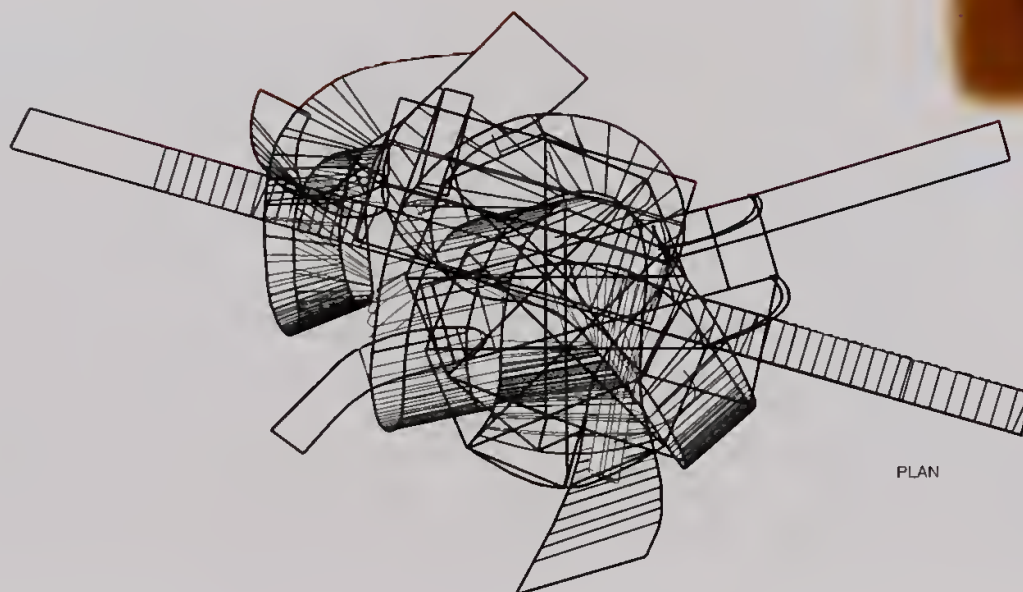
KNOTTED PASSAGE HOUSE



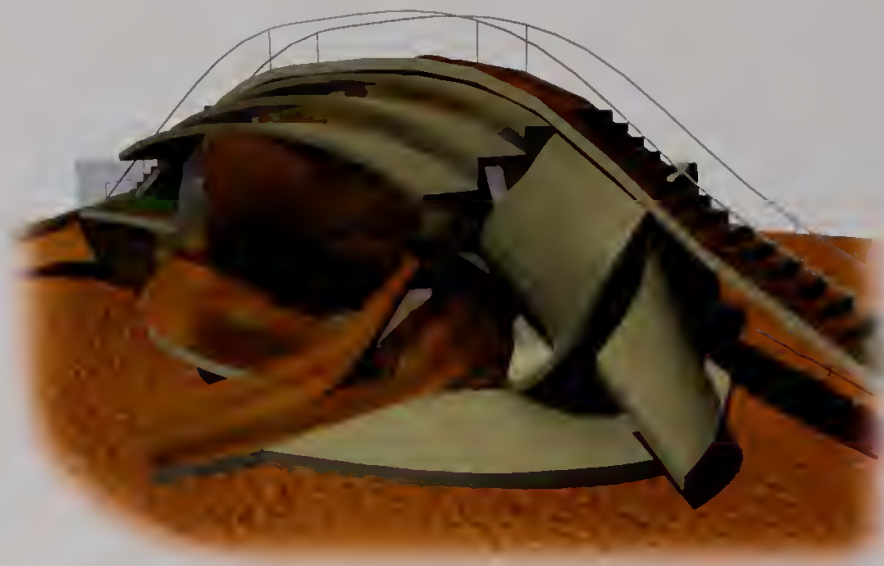
ENTRANCE



TOP VIEW



PLAN

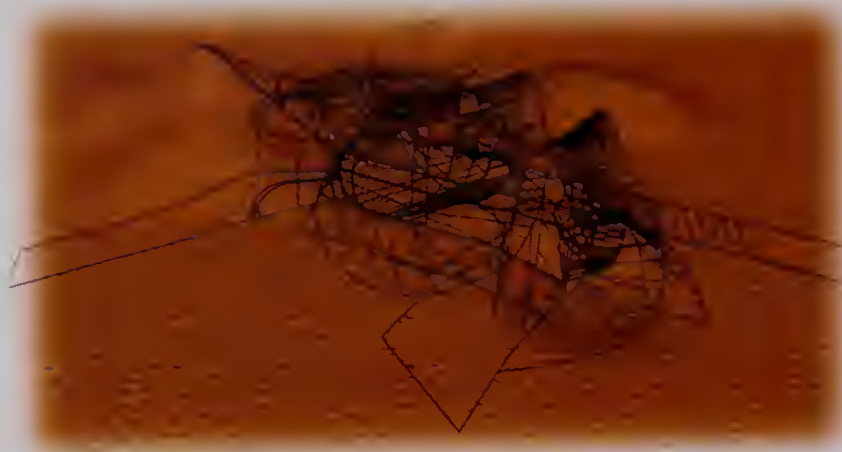


SIDE VIEW



ELEVATION

Inhabiting passages that deny them any stable point of reference, residents cultivate the trajectories of their own movements. The looping of a strand into a knot, exceedingly difficult to envision, is opened for inspection, brought up in scale, and made traversable.

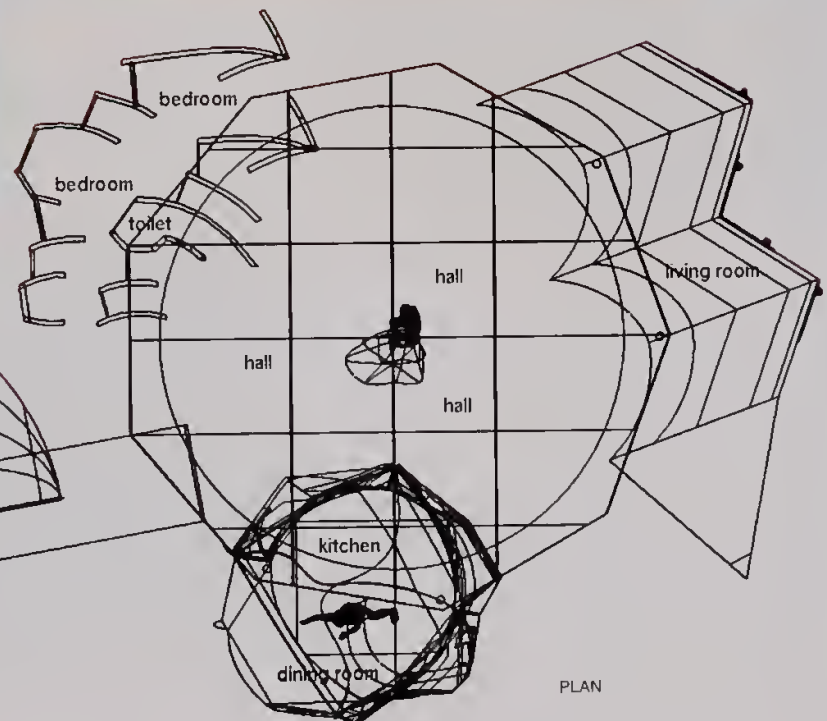
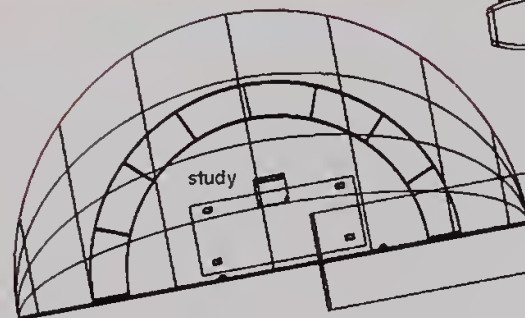


TERRAIN

REVISITABLE / NONREVISITABLE CHAOS HOUSE



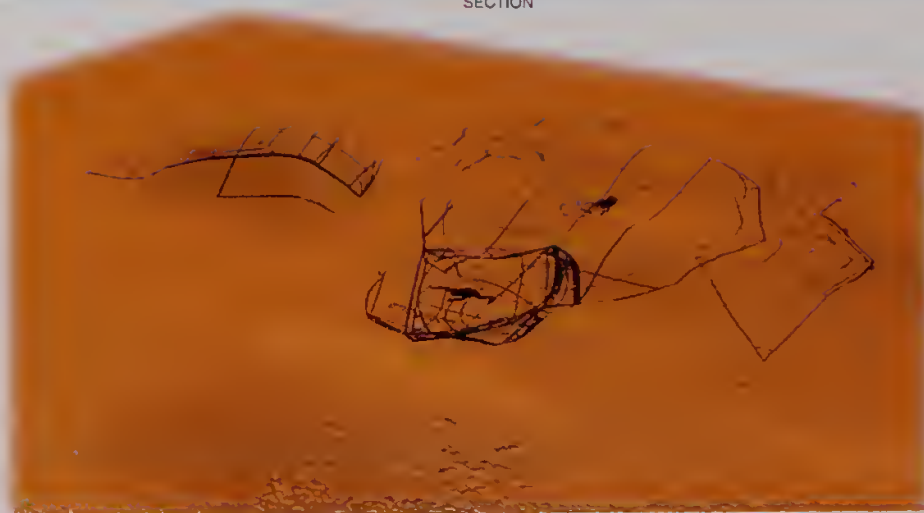
TOP VIEW



PLAN



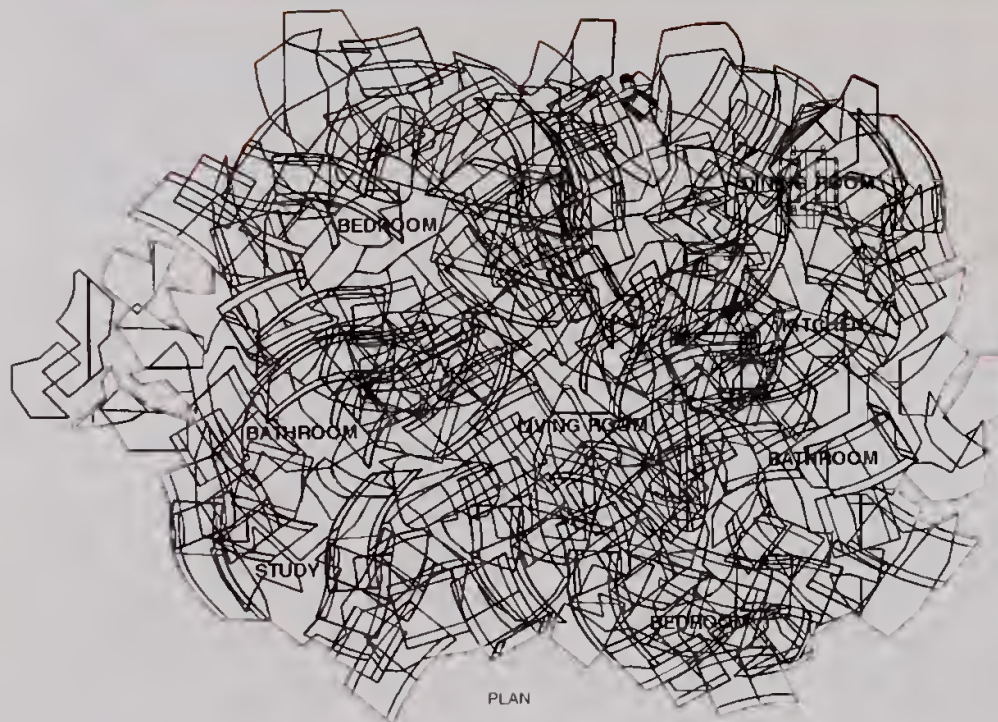
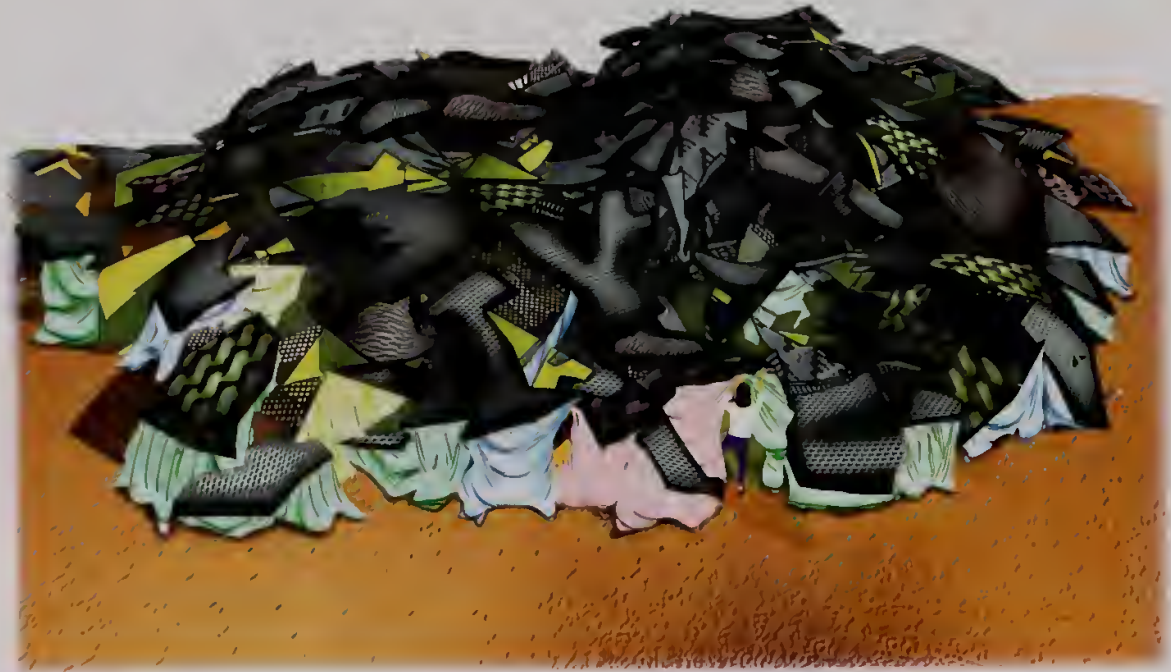
SECTION

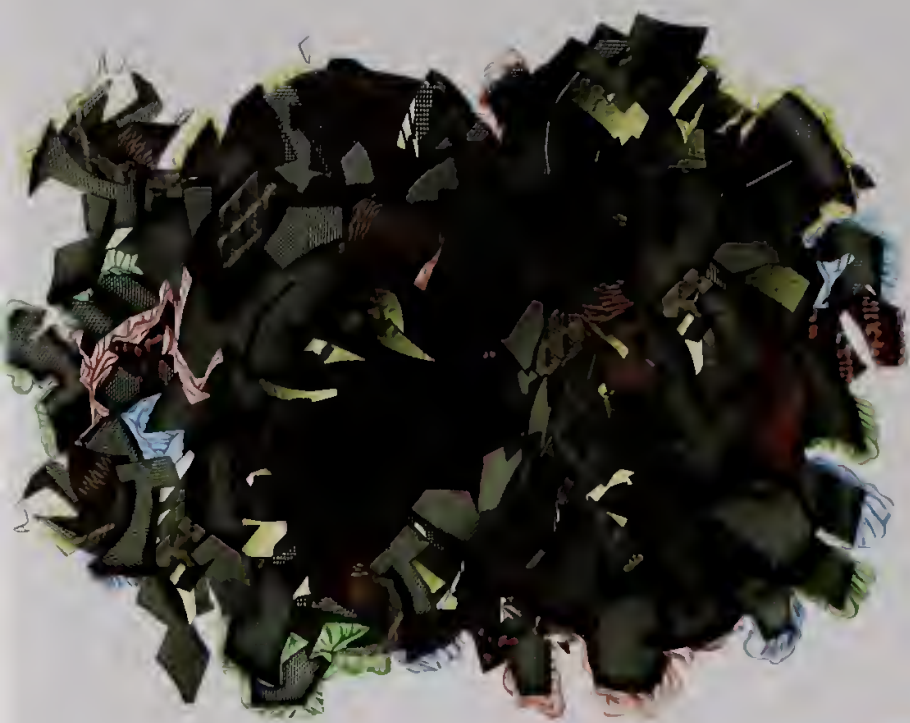


TERRAIN

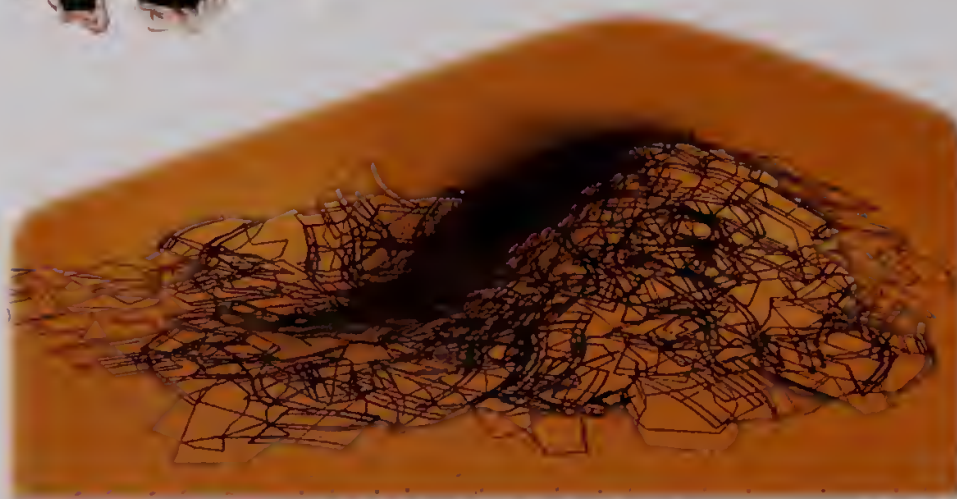
This house fructifies its own existence and those of its residents by tackling simultaneously several approaches to securing a reversible destiny. Gradations on one scale perceptibly underlie those on another. Any inching up on the matter looms fine-grained indeed. Not only can residents gauge their movements to an unheard-of degree of body-screaching precision, but they soon realize that movements themselves function as gauges. Proper gauging assures continuation. Subscribing to reversible destiny means taking a stand against the inevitability of death. Once reversible destiny has been pointed out as a direction, as a radical approach to living, anti-death tentatives must be engaged through practice. Residents sift through chaos in search of that which can be perpetuated.

UBIQUITOUS SITE HOUSE





TOP VIEW



TERRAIN

Shape precludes entry, but entry can occur when a resident forcibly inserts herself into the pliant, half-structured muddle. Room size is proportional to energy expended. Although an occasional dip in the terrain may broaden room expanse, generally, each area pushed open constitutes an architectural surround whose every feature lies within touching distance. Brought to be always within easy reach of the body proper, the architectural body--the body taken as extending to the limits of its architectural surround--reveals itself to be the thinker (also, the one who feels) as much as, or more than, mind ever was.

REVERSIBLE DESTINY HOMES

DOUBLE HORIZONS
DOUBLE HORIZONS

IN EVERY VIEW NOT ONE
BUT TWO (OR MORE!!) HORIZONS



MODEL NO. 4 INFANCY HOUSE

Here the tentativeness of infancy reigns. Several distinct passageways make more than one appearance so that what is missed the first time around can be picked up the next. The house, giving perceivers repeated chances to gather its defining forms, babies perception along. Freed from having to make hasty, ad hoc perceptual judgments in the capacity of an adult, a resident can, in the capacity of an adult-infant, keep events of perceptual capture in abeyance for long stretches of time.

SPECIFICATIONS

Constructed to troubleshoot for its residents in matters of some urgency, this standard six-room house has anticipations of their every need built into it. The house prepares the way for its residents, who never have to come upon a situation cold. Moving through a passageway that prefigures the dining room by mimicking its features, residents can feel themselves entering the room, before ever setting foot in it. If landing sites abound within landing sites, and the body-person is but the sum of the many landing sites it co-originate, exercises in scale are de rigueur. Each of two bathrooms, by existing on three distinct scales at once, lays bare the formative process.



A reversible destiny home provides not merely a place to live, but infinite quantities of spacetime necessary for living.



CRITICAL RESEMBLANCES HOUSE



ARCADE HOUSE



INFLECTED ARCADE HOUSE



INFANCY HOUSE

REVERSIBLE DESTINY HOMES

DOUBLE HORIZONS
DOUBLE HORIZONS

**IN EVERY VIEW NOT ONE
BUT TWO (OR MORE!!) HORIZONS**

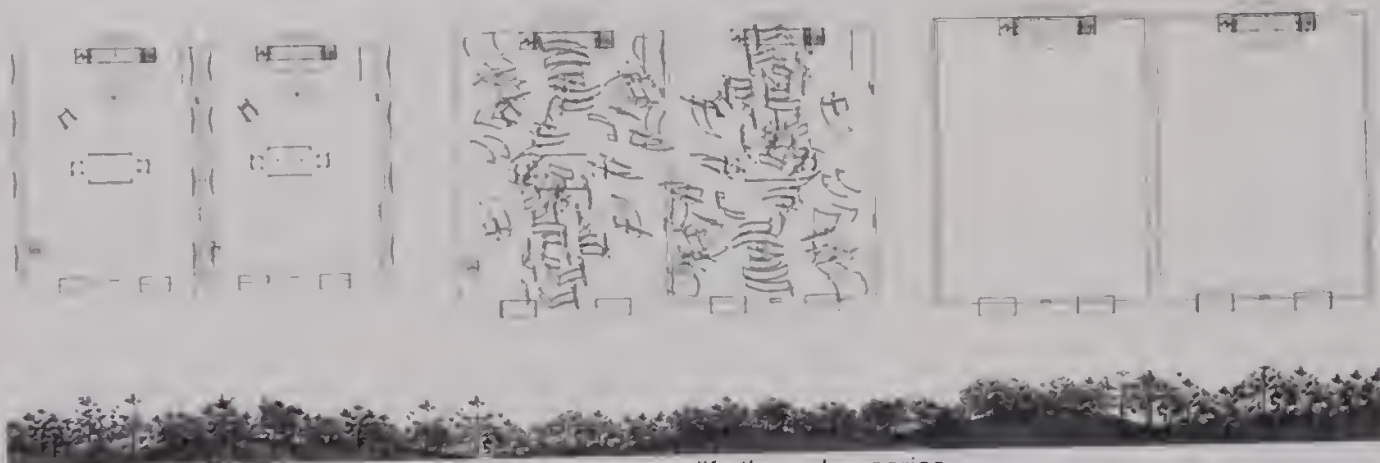


MODEL NO. 5 TWIN HOUSE

In this house, bodily movements most conducive to loosening the fetters of mortality can be isolated, then emphasized. Life's pursuits ramify and grow tentative as residents pledge allegiance to a home sweet home that ranges across two identical suites of rooms. Knowing that an action performed in one part of the house might equally well have been performed in another makes the course of events seem less inevitable and surely less weighty. Doppelgangers hover ever-present, or lives of residents border on being double. Occasions that can be given instant bodily replay cease to appear unique.

SPECIFICATIONS

The meted-out program of the architectural web along half the length of the house anticipates shapes to be assumed and positions to be taken by residents stepping into the other half. The architectural body as cast by one constructed surround can be recast, with telling consequences, by its twin.



*Perpetuate your life through a series
of close (and closer!!) comparisons.*



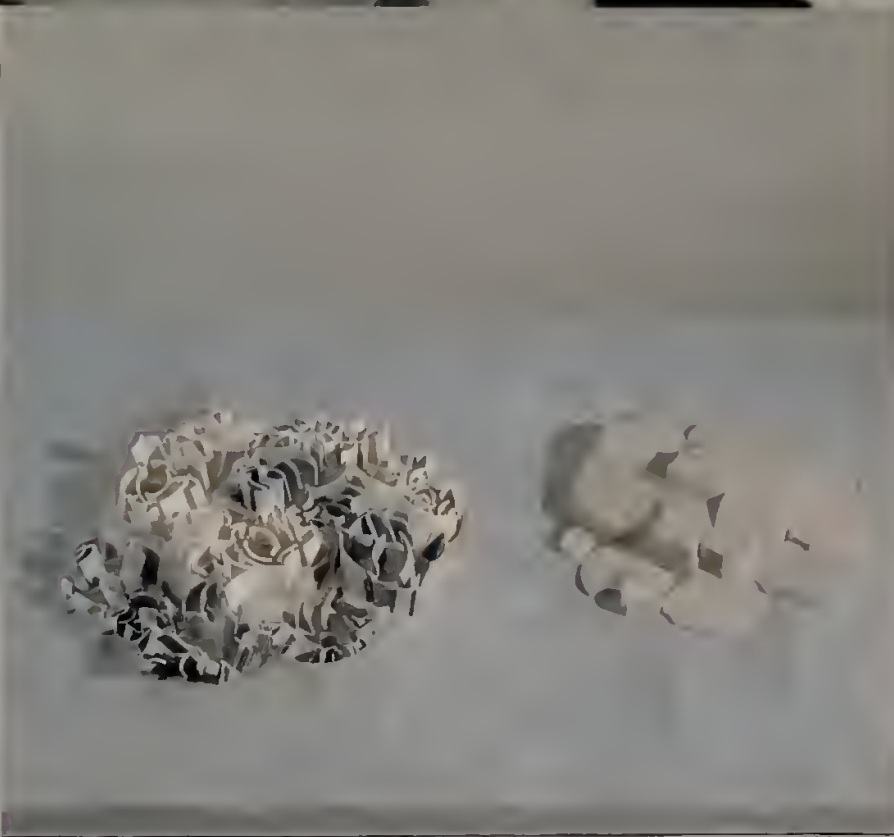
TWIN HOUSE



CLEAVING WAVE HOUSE



ITERATION HOUSE

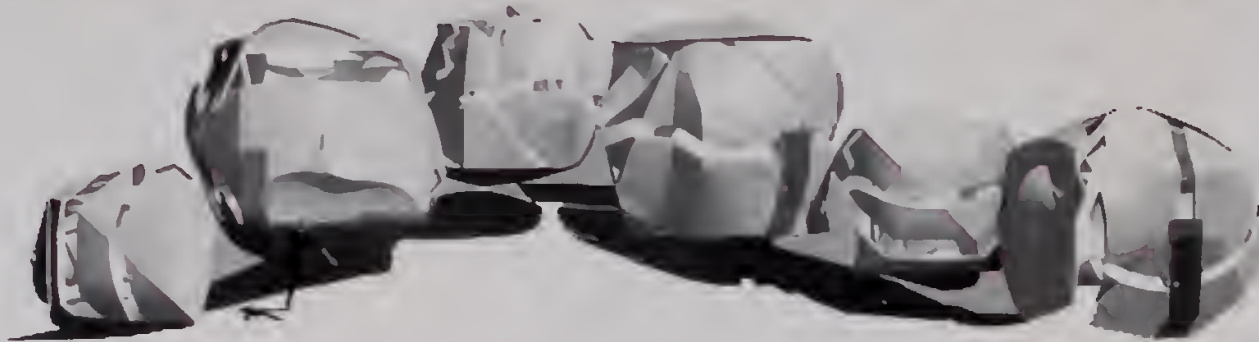


MODULAR LABYRINTH HOUSE

REVERSIBLE DESTINY HOMES

DOUBLE HORIZONS
DOUBLE HORIZONS

IN EVERY VIEW, NOT ONE
BUT TWO (OR MORE!!) HORIZONS

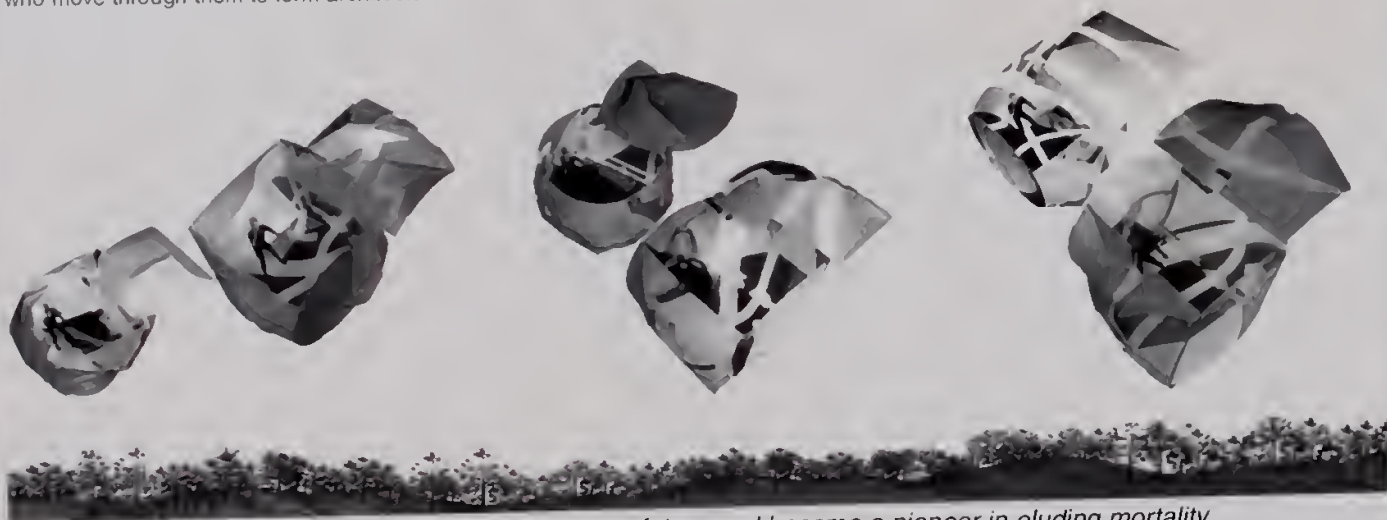


MODEL NO. 11 INFANCY HOUSE--LIGHT CHAOS

A resident of this dwelling launches an initial attack on mortality through ceasing to live a disposable existence. As the basic-generative unit rotates, the site of a person turns through itself. A continuity may be had in how landing sites disperse. Memory recycles through shape as rooms serve as mnemonic devices for each other.

SPECIFICATIONS

How architectural bodies form will be studied within these walls uninterrupted. Residents hone in on that which animates them. Various angled interiors, essentially identical, but no longer readily recognizable as such because they have been tumbled, cause those who move through them to form architectural bodies that contrast in revealing ways.



Put a reversible destiny home in your future and become a pioneer in eluding mortality.



MORPHED TWIST HOUSE



ROTATION HOUSE



INFANCY HOUSE—LIGHT CHAOS



GRANITE HOUSE

REVERSIBLE DESTINY HOMES

DOUBLE HORIZONS
DOUBLE HORIZONS

IN EVERY VIEW, NOT ONE
BUT TWO (OR MORE!!) HORIZONS



MODEL NO. 14 INDETERMINACY HOUSE

Here is a house that "moves" through itself as more of itself and as other than itself. Offering an overabundance of choices, it promotes indecisiveness in residents, who often find themselves unable to determine where they should position themselves and why. Exacting much more from residents than do most reversible destiny dwellings, the house rewards those who meet its demands by bringing reversible destiny within their reach relatively soon.

SPECIFICATIONS

Window-lines can be adjusted to vary the amount of heat and light that is admitted. Each facet has its own characteristic membrane, a composite of a variety of experimental materials. Moving between two sets of five distinct regions of activity, or zones of endeavor, residents, never quite finding themselves to be home where they actually are, will have hardly any presence to speak of. Residents who are hard put to declare themselves as presences can also, fortuitously, not be readily targeted for dying. Observing changes in comportment to come about through changes in the architectural surround, they become comparative beings to their core, carefully checking what has an effect on what and assessing ramifications of changes in comportment. "That that which is ongoing not cease," they intone as they go along.



*Not willing to settle for a mere 100 or so years of life?
Move into a reversible destiny home.*



AMORPHOUS
INTERPENETRATION HOUSE



INDETERMINACY HOUSE



KNOTTED PASSAGE HOUSE

REVERSIBLE DESTINY HOMES

DOUBLE HORIZONS
DOUBLE HORIZONS

IN EVERY VIEW, NOT ONE
BUT TWO (OR MORE!!) HORIZONS



MODEL NO. 17 UBIQUITOUS SITE HOUSE

In an extreme effort to oust death from the premises, the ubiquitous site, the site of a body-person inclusive of all that is within her perceptual ken, is reined in. As the body chews on the cud of its own expressivity, a monadology ensues. The architectural body is the ubiquitous site taken as an entity.

SPECIFICATIONS

Shape precludes entry, but entry can happen upon a resident's forceful insertion of herself into the pliant, half-structured muddle. Effort, having reentered infancy, flails about and cries out. Residents who open paths through chaotic amassings ferret out processes central to their own formation. The direct relation that bodily articulation bears to thinking becomes apparent and critically assessable.



Put a reversible destiny home in your future and become a pioneer in eluding mortality.

UBIQUITOUS SITE HOUSE

Reversible Destiny Houses

pages 258–59

Proposal board for **Critical Resemblances House**, 1985

page 260

Study for labyrinth segments of upper level, **Critical Resemblances House** 1985–86

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Study for labyrinth segments of lower level, **Critical Resemblances House**, 1985–86,

pages 262–63

Proposal board for **Arcade House**, 1990

pages 264–65

Proposal board for **Inflected Arcade House**, 1989

pages 266–67

Proposal board for **Infancy House**, 1989

page 268,

top Study for **Bathroom A, Infancy House**, 1989

bottom Study for **Bathroom B, Infancy House**, 1989

page 269,

top Study for **Bedroom, Infancy House**, 1989

bottom Study for **Dining Room, Infancy House**, 1989

pages 270–71

Proposal board for **Twin House**, 1992

page 272

Study for **Room A, Twin House**, 1992

page 273

Study for **Room B, Twin House**, 1992

pages 274–75

Proposal board for **Cleaving Wave House**, 1991

pages 276–77

Proposal board for **Iteration House**, 1992

pages 278–79

Proposal board for **Modular Labyrinth House**, 1991

pages 280–81

Proposal board for **Morphed Twist House**, 1991

pages 282–83

Proposal board for **Rotation House**, 1993

pages 284–85

Proposal board for **Infancy House—Light Chaos**, 1989

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Study for **Infancy House—Light Chaos**, 1989

page 287

Study for **Infancy House—Light Chaos**, 1989

pages 288–89

Proposal board for **Gravitational Ethics House**, 1992

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Studies for a multiple dwelling based on **Gravitational Ethics House**, 1993

pages 290–91

Close-up of **Gravitational Ethics House**, 1993

pages 292–93

Proposal board for **Amorphous Interpenetration House**, 1990

pages 294–95

Proposal board for **Indeterminacy House**, 1991

pages 296–97

Proposal board for **Knotted Passage House**, 1992

pages 298–99

Proposal board for **Revisitable/Nanrevisitable Chaos House**, 1993

pages 300–01

Proposal board for **Ubiquitous Site House**, 1993

page 302

Brochure for **Model no. 4 Infancy House**, 1989

page 303,

top left Model for **Critical Resemblances House**, 1989 Basswood, paint,

paper, particle board, plastic figures, and plastic trees 10 x 33 x 36 inches

top right Model for **Arcade House**, 1991 Basswood, cardboard, paint, paper,

and plaster, 7 x 53 x 40 1/4 inches

bottom left Model for **Inflected Arcade House**, 1991 Basswood, cardboard,

paint, and paper, 7 1/2 x 54 x 48 inches

bottom right Model for **Infancy House**, 1989 Basswood, cardboard, paint,

plaster, and Styrofoam, 7 x 54 x 48 inches

page 304

Brochure for **Model no. 5 Twin House**, 1992

page 305,

top left Model for **Twin House**, 1992 Basswood, paint, and Styrofoam,

21 x 96 x 48 inches

top right Model for **Cleaving Wave House**, 1990 Basswood, cardboard, latex,

paint, paper, plaster, and Styrofoam, 12 x 37 x 52 inches

bottom left Model for **Iteration House**, 1990 Basswood, cardboard, paint,

paper, plastic, Styrofoam, and wax, 12 x 48 x 64 inches

bottom right Model for **Modular Labyrinth House**, 1993 Cardboard,

foamcore, paint, paper, and Styrofoam, 6 x 65 x 42 inches

page 306

Brochure for **Model no. 11 Infancy House—Light Chaos**, 1992

page 307,

top left Model for **Morphed Twist House**, 1992 Balsa, cardboard, paint,

plaster, resin, and Styrofoam, 10 x 48 x 37 inches

top right Model for **Rotation House**, 1993 Acetate, balsa, basswood,

cardboard, paint, paper, and wire mesh, 10 x 48 x 36 1/2 inches

bottom left Model for **Infancy House—Light Chaos**, 1993 Basswood,

cardboard, foam rubber, paint, plaster, plastic, and Styrofoam, 24 x 72 x 48 inches

bottom right Model for **Gravitational Ethics House**, 1990 Basswood,

cardboard, foam rubber, paint, plaster, and plastic, 28 x 72 x 48 inches

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Brochure for **Model no. 14 Indeterminacy House**, 1991

page 309,

top left Model for **Amorphous Interpenetration House**, 1990 Basswood,

cardboard, foam rubber, paint, plaster, and plastic, 14 x 72 x 48 inches

top right Model for **Indeterminacy House**, 1989 Basswood, cardboard,

foam rubber, paint, plaster, plastic mesh, Styrofoam, and threaded steel rods,

37 x 78 x 48 inches

bottom Model for **Knotted Passage House**, 1994–95 Basswood, cardboard

paint, and Styrofoam, 11 1/4 x 72 x 51 inches

page 310

Brochure for **Model no. 17 Ubiquitous Site House**, 1993

page 311

Model for **Ubiquitous Site House**, 1994 Basswood, cardboard, foam rubber,

latex, linoleum, paint, plastic, plaster, Styrofoam, and velvet, 12 x 48 x 73 inches

TYPES OF FUNCTION

FOR HUMAN (SUPER)COMFORT



Le Corbusier, Villa Savoye, 1931

FOR THE SAKE OF A UNIVERSAL SPACETIME



Mies Van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, 1951

FOR THE SAKE OF THE BODY
FOR DETERMINING THE EXTENT OF THE
SITE OF A PERSON



Arakawa and Madeline Gins, Critical Resemblances House, 1995

A MEASURED OR MATURE RESPONSE TO THESE MATTERS IS YET TO BE FOUND. IT'S EITHER FAITH OR NOTHING. THOSE NOT ADOPTING A PIE-IN-THE-SKY ATTITUDE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT NOTHING CAN BE DONE ABOUT THE FACT THAT PEOPLE ARE MORTAL. THE DEFEATIST ATTITUDE TOWARD MORTALITY RUNS RAMPANT. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY: REVERSIBLE DESTINY—A FRONTAL ATTACK ON MORTALITY ITSELF.

REVERSIBLE DESTINY QUESTIONNAIRE

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE INVITES QUESTIONS AS MUCH AS ANSWERS. PREFERENCE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ANSWERS THAT TAKE THE FORM OF ACTION

- 1 *Human mortality need not be inevitable.* How does this statement sit with you? *Human mortality is a given condition.* But could it be that it is only provisionally a given?
- 2 We may be bound to on apparently intractable so-called human destiny simply because we have been unable to gather enough information on our own behalf and to coordinate it properly. Are we in the throes of an inexorably abominable condition that, in effect, is nothing but a sad consequence of the left hand's not knowing what the right is doing?
- 3 Surely there has never been a sufficiently diversified approach to the study of the body in relation to the universe, and only recently has an efficient coordinating of information from existing branches of research become possible. Where's the harm, then, in proceeding on the premise that human mortality theoretically can be amended?
- 4 Just as people throughout the ages and well into the nineteenth century dismissed out of hand the possibility of human flight, so too have people ruled out and continue to rule out the possibility of a nonmortal human life. An entirely new order of architectural surround — the airplane — had to be engineered before human flight became fact. Should we not now, as one millennium draws to a close and another opens, be busy at work on architectural surrounds that directly address the daunting problem of mortality?
- 5 Every architectural surround augments the body proper to some degree. In order to become nonmortal, the body proper needs a new degree of augmentation. The body proper in combination with an architectural surround constitutes an "architectural body." What architectural surrounds promote the most long-lasting architectural bodies?
- 6 Shouldn't cities be dedicated to the perpetuation and further invention of human life? What if simply by walking through a city you could study all you need to know and more? Would you not like to live within surroundings specifically constructed to elicit from you a great number of possible ways—one more surprising than the next—for you to exist as a sensorium?
- 7 The architectural surround can greatly influence the storage rate or recycling rate of transformatory massenergy or spacelime-massenergy. How can we go about assessing which conditions are most conducive to maximum storage and recycling?
- 8 Would you be willing to live your life as part of an architectural research project directed toward helping mortals cease to be mortal?
- 9 Do you want to live in an apartment or house that can help you determine the nature and extent of interactions between you and the universe?
- 10 What lengths would you be willing to go to, or how much inconvenience would you be willing to put up with, in order to counteract the usual human destiny of having to die?
- 11 How much joy would you be willing to endure in order to secure a possibly uninterrupted (endless) future?

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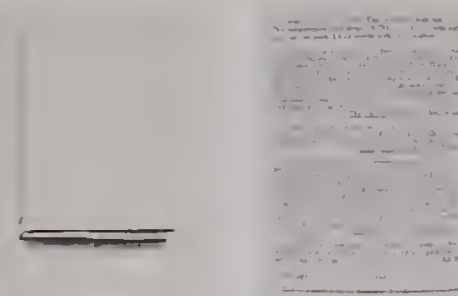
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Madeline Gins

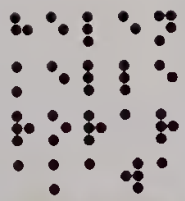
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WHAT THE PRESIDENT
WILL SAY AND DO!

MADLINE GINS



Helen Keller or Arakawa
Madeline Gins

What the President Will Say
and Do! (1973) (left)
Helen Keller or Arakawa (1994) (right)

The President's Logic

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Thinking
I said

Thinking
I said

For stories are too much to be told
around it including an all inclusive
arrangement with meaning and a good
reason that is flexible enough
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Selected Exhibition History

Selected Solo and Two-Person Exhibitions

1960

Tokyo, Muramatsu Gallery, *Another Graveyard*, Sept 21–25

1961

Tokyo, Muda Gallery, *Arakawa Shusaku*, Jan 23–31. Catalogue, with text by Shuzo Takiguchi and essay by Jun Ebara, in English and Japanese

1964

Düsseldorf, Galerie Schmela, *Arakawa*, Jan 24–Feb 13. Brochure
Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, *Arakawa Diagrams*, March 29–April 25
—Walfe, Clair “*Arakawa*” *Artforum* (San Francisco) 2, no. 11 (May 1964), pp. 12, 14
Brussels, Galerie Aujourd’hui, *Palais des Beaux-Arts, Peintures de Arakawa*, Dec 5–19

1965

Düsseldorf, Galerie Schmela, *Arakawa*, Feb 4–23
Tokyo, Minami Gallery, *Shusaku Arakawa*, May 10–22. Catalogue, with essays by Ichiro Horyu, Arato Isazaki, Joseph Love, Yusuke Nakahara, and Yoshiaki Tano
Milan, Galleria dell’Ariete, *Arakawa*, opened Nov 9. Catalogue, with essay by Willoughby Sharp
—Darflès, Gilla “*Lettera da Milano*.” *Art International* (Lugano) 10, no. 1 (Jan. 20, 1966), pp. 89–90.
—Sharp, Willoughby “*Arakawa*” *Marcatré* (Milan) 26, no. 29, p. 237
Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein, *Arakawa. Studia 3*
Nov 23–Dec 23. Brochure, with essay by Dieter Hanisch
—Sammer, Ed “*Bericht aus Deutschland*” *Art International* (Lugano) 10, no. 1 (Jan. 20, 1966), pp. 77–81. In German

1966

New York, Dwan Gallery, *Arakawa*, Jan 4–26. Traveled to
Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, as *Diagrams Arakawa*, April 12–May 7
—Factor, Dan. “*Arakawa*” *Artforum* (Los Angeles) 4, no. 10 (June 1966), pp. 15–16
—Wilson, William. “*Tam [sic] Arakawa’s Blueprints Rely on Ward Association*” *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1966, part 4, p. 6
Düsseldorf, Galerie Schmela, *Arakawa*, April 4–May 4. Brochure, with essay by Dieter Hanisch, in German
Antwerp, Wide White Space Gallery, *Arakawa*, Oct 7–31. Brochure, with essay by Yoshiaki Tano
Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, *Arakawa*, Dec 16, 1966–Jan. 15, 1967. Brochure, with essay by Yoshiaki Tano

1967

Wuppertal Bormen, Kunst und Museumsverein, Ausstellungssäle, *Shusaku Arakawa Bilder und Zeichnungen*, Feb 12–March 12. Catalogue, with essay by Yoshiaki Tano.
Munich, Galerie Seyfried, *Shusaku Arakawa*, March–April. Catalogue, with essay by Yoshiaki Tano, in German
Milan, Galleria Schwarz, *Arakawa*, Oct 3–31. Catalogue, with essay by Guido Balla, in English, French, and Italian.
—Trini, Tammasso. “*Mastre*” *Damus* (Milan), no. 457 (Dec 1967), pp. 49–50.
New York, Dwan Gallery, *Arakawa*, Nov 4–29
—Ashton, Dare “*New York*” *Studia International* (New York) 175, no. 896 (Jan. 1968), pp. 39–41
—Barnitz, Jacqueline “*Arakawa*” *Arts Magazine* (New York) 42, no. 3 (Dec 1967–Jan 1968), p. 53
—Glueck, Grace. “*Trend toward Trendlessness*” *Art in America* (New York) 55, no. 6 (Nov–Dec 1967), p. 124

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—R., F. T. “*Arakawa*” *Pictures an Exhibit* (New York) 31, no. 3 (Dec. 1967), p. 18
—Rosenstein, Harris “*Reviews and Previews*.” *Artnews* (New York) 66, no. 7 (Nov 1967), p. 11

1968

Mannheim, Galerie Lauter, Jan–Feb.

1969

Paris, Galerie Yvan Lambert, *Arakawa*, Jan 16–Feb 15
—Peppiatt, Michael. “*Paris Letter*.” *Art International* (New York) 13, no. 3 (March 20, 1969), pp. 51–55
Tokyo, Minami Gallery, *Arakawa*, March 3–20. Catalogue
Milan, Galleria Schwarz, *Arakawa*, May 6–31. Catalogue, with essay by Tammasso Trini, in English, French, and Italian
New York, Dwan Gallery, *Decisive Evidence Arakawa*, Nov 1–27
—Bourgeois, Jean-Louis. “*New York Arakawa*, Dwan Gallery,” *Artforum* (New York) 8, no. 5 (Jan. 1970), p. 71
—Kurtz, Stephen A. “*Reviews and Previews*” *Artnews* (New York) 68, no. 8 (Dec. 1969), p. 8
—Ratcliff, Carter. “*New York Letter*.” *Art International* (New York) 14, no. 1 (Jan. 20, 1970), pp. 87–99

1970

Paris, Animation Recherche Confrontation, Musée National d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Arakawa Peintures Recentes*, Feb. 24–March 15. Brochure, with essay by Lawrence Alloway.
—Applegate, Judith. “*Paris*.” *Art International* (Lugano) 14, no. 4 (April 20, 1970), pp. 75–76. In English
—Bourgeois, Bernard, “*Arakawa. Un langage austère*” *Poriscope* (Paris) no. 96 (Feb. 25–March 3), p. 64
—M., J. “*Quatre artistes étranger au Musée de la Ville de Paris*” *Le Monde* (Paris), March 12, 1970
—Marchand, Sabine “*Activité de l’A R C au Musée de la Ville de Paris*” *Le Figaro* (Paris), March 5, 1970
—Millet, Catherine “*Arakawa*” *Lettres paucaises* (Paris), March 4–10, p. 27
Berlin, Onnasch Galerie, *Shusaku Arakawa*, May 1–31
—Ohff, Heinz. “*Shusaku Arakawa*” *Das Kunstwerk* (Stuttgart) 23, no. 9–10 (June–July 1970), pp. 46–47
Venice, XXXV Biennale, Japanese Pavilion, *Shusaku Arakawa*, June 24–Oct 25. Catalogue, with essay by Yoshiaki Tano, in English and Italian.
—Fagane, Vittorio. “*La 35 Biennale di Venezia—Arakawa*,” *Arte Illustrata* (Turin) 30–33, no. 3 (June–Sept 1970), pp. 84–85 (illustrations), 145–46 (English)
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Karlsruhe, Badischer Kunstverein, *Arakawa*, Aug 21–Oct 4. Catalogue, with essay by Georg Bussmann and text by Arakawa

1971

Paris, Galerie Yvan Lambert, *Arakawa*, April 16–May 2
—Millet, Catherine. “*Arakawa*” *Flash Art* (Milan), nos. 25–26 (June–July 1971), p. 5, international edition. In English
Cologne, Onnasch Galerie, Nov–Dec. Catalogue, with essays by Lawrence Alloway and Georg Bussmann
Milan, Galleria Schwarz, *Arakawa*, Nov 9–Dec 7. Catalogue, with essay by Nicolas Calas, in English, French, and Italian
London, Angela Flowers Gallery, *Arakawa*, Nov 17–Dec. 11. Brochure, with essay by Suzi Gablik
Frankfurt, Frankfurter Kunstverein, *Mechanismus der Bedeutung*, Dec 17, 1971–Jan 30, 1972. Traveled to Hamburg, Kunsthalle Hamburg, March 25–April 23, 1972 (brochure, published as *Ferdinands-Tarblatt* [Hamburg], March 24, 1972, with essays by Werner Hoffmann, Michael Schwarz, and Joachim Heusinger van Waldegg), Bern, Kunsthalle Bern, May 6–June 18, 1972 (brochure, with essay by Carla Huber), Berlin, Nationalgalerie Berlin, Aug 11–Sept 18, 1972, and Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Oct 4–Nov 5, 1972
—Billeter, Erika. “*Philosophische Stenogramme*” *Zuri* (Zurich), May 25, 1972
—Billeter, Fritz. “*Die fappenden Ratsel des Shusaku Arakawa*.” *Tages-Anzeiger* (Basel), May 23, 1972
—Glazer, Laszlo, “*Denkfehler unbegriffen Arakawas Bildtafeln*” *Mechanismus der Bedeutung*” *Sddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich), June 2, 1972, p. 37
—Kramer-Bodani, Rudolf. “*Schöne Bilder eines Großenwohnsinnigen*.” *Die Welt* (Hamburg), March 27, 1972, section H, p. 19
—Kramer-Bodani, Rudolf. “*Eulenspiegel nebst Wittgenstein*” *Die Welt* (Berlin), Aug 14, 1972
—Mösch, Inge. “*Mechanismus der Bedeutung*” *Hamburger Abendblatt* (Hamburg), March 29, 1972.
—Ohff, Heinz. “*Malerei als absurde Lektüre*” *Der Tages Spiegel* (Berlin), Aug 12, 1972
—“*Sag eins, denk zwei*” *Der Spiegel* (Homburg), Jan 17, 1972, pp. 106–07

1972

Munich, Galerie van de Loo, *Arakawa. 12 Zeichnungen 1968–1972*, May 17–June 16. Catalogue
Zurich, Galerie Art in Progress, *Arakawa*, closed June 30
Milan, Galleria Schwarz, *Shusaku Arakawa*, Nov 9–Dec 7. Catalogue, with essay by Nicolas Calas, in English and Italian
New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *Arakawa. From the Mechanism of Meaning*, Nov 18–Dec 31
—Frank, Peter. “*La Ronald Feldman Gallery*” *Artitudes* (Saint Jeannet, France) no. 2, Dec. 1972–Jan 1973, p. 39
—Kingsley, April. “*Reviews and Previews*” *Artnews* (New York) 72, no. 1 (Jan 1973), pp. 18–19
—Kingsley, April. “*New York Letter*,” *Art International* (Lugano) 17, no. 2 (Feb 1973), pp. 42–45
—Stielman, Paul. “*Galleries*” *Arts Magazine* (New York) 47, no. 3 (Dec 1972–Jan. 1973), p. 75

1973

Genoa, Galleria La Bertesca, *Arakawa*, opened Jan. 28
Minneapolis, John C. Staller & Co., *Arakawa*, April 6–May 12
Minneapolis, Dayton’s Gallery 12, *Arakawa*, April 7–May 12
Washington, D.C., Fendrick Gallery, *Arakawa*, June 1–26
Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Arakawa Paintings and Drawings*, Nov 16–Dec 9
—Seldis, Henry J., and William Wilson, “*La Cienega Area*” *Los Angeles Times*, Nov 30, 1973, part 4, p. 24

1974

Milan, Galleria l’Uomo e l’Arte, Alessandra Castelli Gallery, *Arakawa*, April. Traveled to Bergamo, Galleria l’Uomo e l’Arte
—“*Arakawa. Una mostra e un film a milano*” *Domus* (Milan), no. 536 (July 1974), p. 49
Eau Claire, Foster Gallery, University of Wisconsin, *Arakawa*, April 1–19
—“*New York Artist Presents ‘Playful,’ ‘Ambiguous’ Works*” *Spectator* (Eau Claire) 51, April 4, 1974, p. 6
Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Arakawa*, closed Sept. 30.
—Wilson, William. “*Art Walk. A Critical Guide to the Galleries*” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept 13, 1974, part 4, p. 10
New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Arakawa. Recent Prints*, Sept 6–Nov 3
New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *A Forgettence* (Exhaustion Exhuded), Oct 19–Nov. 16
—Alloway, Lawrence. “*Art*” *The Nation* (New York), Nov 16, 1974, pp. 509–10
—Fradmann, Noel. “*Arakawa*” *Arts Magazine* (New York) 49, no. 5 (Jan 1975), p. 10
—Frank, Peter. “*Shusaku Arakawa*” *Artnews* (New York) 73, no. 10 (Dec 1974), p. 80
—Robinson, Walter. “*Arakawa at Feldman*” *Art in America* (New York) 63, no. 1 (Jan–Feb 1975), pp. 86–87
Munich, Galerie Art in Progress, Nov–Dec

1975

- Cincinnati, Corl Salway Gallery, Feb–March
 Naples, Pasquale Trisano, Arakawa, March 26–April 24
 —Roccosalvo, Maria "Arakawa alla Galleria Trisano."
L'Unità (Rome), April 26, 1975
 Stockholm, Galerie Aranawitsch, Arakawa, April 5–26
 —Granath, Olle "Att besvärja rädslan" *Dagens Nyheter*
 (Stockholm), April 20, 1975
 Bremen, Paula Becker-Madersohn Haus, Shusaku Arakawa,
 July 26–Sept 7
 —Winter, Peter. "Shusaku Arakawa" *Dos Kunstwerk*
 (Stuttgart) 28, no. 5 (Sept.), p. 70
 Oslo, Sonja Henie-Onstad Kunstzentrum, Arakawa, grafik,
 Aug 1–Sept. 28
 Brussels, Galerie Isy Brachot, Arakawa, Oct 30–Dec 13. Brochure,
 in French.
 Düsseldorf, Galerie Art in Progress, Arakawa, Dec 1975–Jan 1976
 —Friedrichs, Yvonne "Das Mirakel selbst machen." *Rheinische Post*
 (Düsseldorf), Dec. 18, 1975
 —Friedrichs, Yvonne "Shusaku Arakawa" *Dos Kunstwerk*
 (Stuttgart) 29, no. 2 (March 1976), p. 44
 —Jappe, Georg "Düsseldorf—Shusaku Arakawa" *Die Zeit*
 (Hamburg), Dec. 26, 1975
 —Westecker, Dieter. "Anfang mit einem berühmten Japaner"
WZ—Düsseldorf Nachrichten, Dec. 9, 1975
 Paris, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Arakawa, Dec. 4, 1975–Jan. 5, 1976

1976

- Barcelona, Galeria 42, Arakawa. Obra gráfica, opened Feb. 3.
 Brochure, with essay by Juan Manuel Banet
 Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, Arakawa Prints 1965–1975,
 Feb. 14–March 21
 Las Altas, Rubican Gallery, Arakawa, April 9–May 5
 Chicago, Dorothy Rosenthal Gallery, Arakawa. *Selected Prints*
 1965–1976, opened April 30
 Antwerp, I C C Antwerp, Shusaku Arakawa, May 14–June 13.
 Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, Arakawa: A Decade of Prints
 1965–1975, June 5–July 10
 Tokyo, Minami Gallery, Arakawa Prints, June 10–30
 New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts (paintings) and Multiples, Inc.
 (drawings and prints), Arakawa: *The Signified or If*, Oct. 2–Nov. 6
 —Ashtan, Dore "New York," *Coloquia artes* (Lisbon) 19, no. 34
 (Oct. 1977), pp. 14–21 (English), 85–86 (French)
 —Boorsch, Suzanne "Arakawa" *Artnews* (New York) 76, no. 3
 (March 1977), pp. 110–12
 —Frackman, Noel "Arakawa." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 51,
 no. 4 (Dec. 1976), pp. 26–27
 —Krugman, Michael. "Arakawa at Feldman and Multiples" *Art in*
America (New York) 65, no. 2 (March–April 1977), pp. 112–13
 —Levin, Kim "Arakawa" *Arts Magazine* (New York) 51, no. 4
 (Dec. 1976), p. 11
 —Russell, John. "New Paintings by Arakawa" *The New York Times*,
 Oct. 8, 1976, section C, p. 17

1977

- Bogotá, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Arakawa, Feb. 15–
 March 6. Catalogue, with essay by Jorge Aguilar Mora
 Nagaya, Valeur Gallery, Arakawa, March. Catalogue, with essay by
 Shunkichi Bobo, in Japanese
 Paris, Galerie Maeght, *Le Signifié ou si*, March 23–May 3.
 Catalogue, published as *Dernière Le Mirail*, no. 223 (March 1977),
 with text by Madeline Gins and essay by Nicolas Calas
 —De Hoas, Patrick. "Arakawa" *Art Press* (Paris) no. 8 (June 1977),
 p. 40
 —Kenedy, R C "Paris: A Report" *Art International* (Lugano) 21,
 no. 4 (July–Aug. 1977), pp. 57–62
 —Michel, Jacques "Les équivalences d'Arakawa," *Le Monde* (Paris)
 April 2, 1977
 Milwaukee, University of Wisconsin Art History Gallery, Arakawa
 Graphics, Sept. 8–Oct. 7
 Düsseldorf, Galerie Art in Progress, Oct.–Nov.

- Düsseldorf, Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Arakawa, Oct. 7–
 Nov. 27. Catalogue, with texts by Madeline Gins and Arakawa,
 in English and German. Traveled to Berlin, Nationalgalerie Berlin,
 Jan. 26–March 11, 1978, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, April 6–
 May 21, 1978 (brochure, with essay by Marja Bloem, in Dutch),
 and Graz, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, June 8–
 July 9, 1978
 —Bauer, Arnold "Ein erklärendes Wort wäre dieser Bilderwelt dien-
 lich." *Berliner Morgenpost* (Berlin), Jan. 26, 1978
 —D., L. P. "Anatomische Skizzen. Arakawa stellt aus." *Berliner*
Stimme (Berlin), Feb. 4, 1978
 —van Ginneken, Lily "Werk van Arakawa nogal verwarrend"
De Volkskrant (Amsterdam), May 5, 1978
 —Peters, Philip "De Dekmantel van Arakawa" *Kunstbeeld*
 (Amsterdam) 2, no. 7 (1978), p. 35
 —Waldheim, Gisela "Komplizierte Denkaufgaben in der Ebene des
 Sehens" *Die Welt* (Berlin), Jan. 26, 1978

1978

- Nagaya, Gallery Takagi, *Complete Prints*, exhibited in seven parts.
Blue Prints, March 22–April 2, 1965–1970, May 23–June 4,
 1971–1973, July 4–16, 1974–1975, Sept. 12–24; 1976–1977,
 Nov. 24–Dec. 10, Arakawa. *New Prints*, March 23–April 28,
 1979; and *The Mechanism of Meaning*, July 7–29, 1979
 Catalogue, with essay by Shuza Takiguchi, in English and Japanese.
 Traveled to Tokyo, Fuji TV Gallery, as Shusaku Arakawa. *Selected*
Print Works 1965–78, June 2–19, 1979
 —H. "The World of Arakawa." *Gallery* (Tokyo) 9 (June 1978),
 pp. 9–16. In Japanese
 —"Leading the Avant-Garde of the World." *Yomiuri Shimbun*
 (Nagaya), July 9, 1979, p. 3. In Japanese
 —"Shusaku Arakawa." *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Nagaya), July 3, 1979
 In Japanese
 —"A Thinker's Expression: Beyond Figurative/Abstract." *Yomiuri*
Shimbun (Nagaya), July 17, 1979. In Japanese.
 Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, Arakawa, April 6–May 21. Brochure
 Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, Arakawa. *Recent Paintings*,
 Nov. 8–Dec. 2
 —Wilson, William, and Suzanne Muchnic. "La Cienega Area"
Los Angeles Times, Nov. 17, 1978, part 4, p. 8

1979

- Williamstown, Massachusetts, Williams College Museum of Art,
 Arakawa. *Prints*, Feb. 2–28. Catalogue, with introduction
 by Craig Dennis and essay by Stephen Eisenman and Brian
 Lukacher.
 New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, uptown gallery, 1961–65,
 downtown gallery, *Recent Paintings*, March 24–April 21
 —Frank, Peter. "Mechanisms of Meaning" *The Village Voice*
 (New York) 24, no. 16 (April 23, 1979), p. 80
 —Rickey, Carrie. "Arakawa. Ronald Feldman Fine Arts." *Artforum*
 (New York) 17, no. 10 (summer 1979), p. 65
 —Russell, John. "Arakawa." *The New York Times*, April 13, 1979,
 section C, p. 21.
 —Wallis, Brian "Arakawa." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 54, no. 1
 (Sept. 1979), p. 11.
 New York, Multiples Inc. Gallery, Arakawa, May 5–26
 —Buonagurio, Edgar "Arakawa." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 54,
 no. 3 (Nov. 1979), p. 20
 Tokyo, The Seibu Museum of Art, Arakawa, June 30–July 22
 Catalogue, with text by Madeline Gins and essays by Shuza
 Takiguchi and Takahiko Okada, in English and Japanese
 —Kimura, Shigenabu. "Language to Be Seen, Paintings to Be
 Read." *Asahi Shimbun* (Tokyo), July 14, 1979. In Japanese
 —"Retrospective of Shusaku Arakawa." *Asahi Shimbun* (Tokyo),
 July 18, 1979, p. 9. In Japanese
 —Taki, Teiza "Avant-Garde with Plain Japanese Senses." *Nikkei*
Newspaper (Tokyo), July 17, 1979. In Japanese
 —Terada "Geometrical Expression of Concepts." *Tokyo Shimbun*,
 July 18, 1979. In Japanese
 —Toshioki, Minemura "Between Meaningless and the Meaning"
Japan Art News (Tokyo), July 1, 1979. In Japanese

- Tokyo, Fuji TV Gallery, Arakawa Prints, July 2–9
 Kobe, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Arakawa Print
 Works 1965–1979, July 3–Aug. 5. Brochure, with essay by
 Stephen Eisenman and Brian Lukacher, in Japanese. Traveled to
 Kitakyushu, Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art. Nov. 23–
 Dec. 23. Catalogue; in Japanese.
 —Nakonishi. "Never Believe the Story." *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Osaka),
 July 19, 1979. In Japanese
 Osaka, The National Museum of Art, Arakawa. *The Mechanism of*
Meaning, July 5–Aug. 7. Catalogue, with preface by Arakawa and
 Madeline Gins; in English and Japanese
 Nagaya, Gallery Takagi, Arakawa. *Oil Paintings 1*, Oct. 2–31
 Nagaya, Gallery Takagi, Arakawa. *Oil Paintings 2*, Nov. 6–Dec. 2
 Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Arakawa. *The*
Mechanism of Meaning. Thirty-six Drawings from the Collection of
Shirley and Miles Fiterman, Dec. 12, 1979–Feb. 17, 1980
 Catalogue, with introduction by Samuel Sachs II and essay by
 Nicolas Calas

1980

- Minneapolis, John C. Staller & Co., Arakawa. New York,
 March 7–May 3
 Bay Harbor Islands, Florida, Gloria Luria Gallery, Arakawa
Paintings—Drawings, March 9–31
 —Kahan, Helen "Arakawa." *The Miami Herald*, April 4, 1980
 Zurich, Galerie Maeght, Arakawa, April 11–May 8. Catalogue, with
 essay by Margit Weinberg-Staber, in German
 Nagaya, Gallery Takagi, Arakawa. *Original Posters 1966–1979*.
 April 15–May 11
 Nagaya, Gallery Takagi, Arakawa. *New Prints 1979–1980*,
 Sept. 16–Oct. 18
 Pittsburgh, Michael Berger Gallery, Arakawa. *Recent Prints*,
 Oct. 4–26. Brochure, with essay by Susan Berger-Jones

1981

- New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, uptown gallery, *Aspects of*
Blank, April 11–May 23, downtown gallery, *Early Works*,
 April 15–May 23
 —Levin, Kim "Arakawa." *The Village Voice* (New York), April 29–
 May 5, 1981, p. 64
 Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Arakawa. *Bilder und*
Zeichnungen 1962–1981, Oct. 30–Dec. 13. Catalogue, with essay
 by Armin Zweite. Traveled to Hannover, Kestner-Gesellschaft,
 Dec. 18, 1981–Jan. 31, 1982
 —"Arakawa in der Kestner-Gesellschaft." *Hannover Woche*,
 no. 51 (Dec. 1981), p. 5
 —Dienst, Rolf-Günter "Arakawa." *Das Kunstwerk* (Stuttgart) 35,
 no. 1 (Feb. 1982), pp. 76–77. In German
 Chicago, The Arts Club of Chicago, Arakawa, Nov. 18–Dec. 31
 Catalogue, with essay by Danielle Rice
 —Homerin, Th. Emil, and M. Staff Brandl. "Arakawa." *New Art*
Examiner (Chicago) 9, no. 5 (Feb. 1982), p. 16
 —Schulze, Franz "Arakawa's Art Speaks More to the Eye Than to
 the Mind." *Chicago Sun Times*, Dec. 13, 1981
 Chicago, Dorothy Rosenthal Gallery, Arakawa. *Recent Prints*,
 opened Dec. 1
 New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, Arakawa. *Recent Prints*,
 Dec. 1, 1981–Jan. 31, 1982.
 Nagaya, Gallery Takagi, Arakawa. *New Prints 1980–1981*
 Dec. 10, 1981–Feb. 14, 1982

1982

- Nagaya, Gallery Takagi, Arakawa. *Five Oil Paintings 1972–1978*,
 March 3–April 25
 Paris, Galerie Maeght, Arakawa. *Peintures récentes*, April 22–
 May 28. Catalogue, published as *Dernière le mirail*, no. 252
 (1982), with texts by Arakawa and Madeline Gins
 Paris, Galerie Yvon Lambert, *Aspect of Blank*, April 24–May 26
 —Hahn, Ota "Arakawa." *L'Express* (Paris), May 21–27
 Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, Arakawa Prints, May 27–
 June 30

—Muchnic, Suzanne. "Galleries La Cienega Area " *Los Angeles Times*, June 11, 1982, part 6, p. 12
 Tokushima, Tokushima Cultural Center, *Complete Prints*, June 3–13
 Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum, *Arakawa Matrix* 72, Aug. 28–
 Nov. 7 Catalogue, with text by Arakawa and Madeline Gins and
 essay by Danielle Rice
 Hyogo, Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, *Prints of Arakawa*,
 Nov. 30, 1982–Jan. 30, 1983

1983

New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *Atmospheric Resemblances*
 (A Life of Blank), March 26–April 23
 —Eisenman, Stephen F., and Brian Lukocher, "Arakawa."
Arts Magazine (New York) 57, no. 10 (June 1983), p. 13
 Milan, Galleria Milono, *Shusaku Arakawa*, Oct. 4–Dec. 10
 —Serra, Patrizia "Arakawa " *Terza Occhio* (Bologna) 9, no. 4,
 pp. 61–62
 Albuquerque, University Art Museum, The University of New Mexico,
Arakawa The Mechanism of Meaning, Nov. 5–Dec. 11.
 Kitakyushu, Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, *Arakawa*
Print Works 1965–1983, Nov. 10–Dec. 18 Separate catalogues
 in English and Japanese. Traveled to Nagoya, N-1 Studio,
 Oct. 15–Dec. 15, 1984
 Kitakyushu, Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, *Arakawa: Space*
as Intention, Nov. 10–Dec. 18 Catalogue (Nagoya: Gallery
 Takogi), with text by Arakawa and Madeline Gins, in English and
 Japanese. Traveled to Miyagi, Miyagi Museum of Art, Jan. 7–
 Feb. 12, 1984, and Nagoya, N-1 Studio, March 6–April 20, 1984

1984

Milan, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, *Arakawa*, Jan. 19–
 Feb. 20 Catalogue, with text by Jean-François Lyotard, in English,
 French, and Italian.
 —Angelus, Margherita "Il fascino satirico di Arakawa e Valentini "
Viva (Milan), Feb. 8, 1984
 —"Arakawa & C. " *Il Corriere della Sera* (Milan), Feb. 15, 1984
 —"Opere inedite di Arakawa " *Il Giornale* (Milan), Jan. 14, 1984
 —Palmisani, Loredana. "Il colore del Giappone è bianco e grigio."
Avanti (Rome) Feb. 9, 1984
 —S., L. "Nei grandi spazi di Via Palestro frecce e terracotta "
La Repubblica (Roma), Jan. 29, 1984

Nagoya, Gallery Takagi, *Arakawa New Prints*, Feb. 14–March 3.
 Surrey, British Columbia, Surrey Art Gallery, *Arakawa The*
Mechanism of Meaning Thirty-six Drawings from the Collection
of Shirley and Miles Filterman, March 8–April 8
 Tokyo, Inoue Gallery, *Arakawa 1966–1969*, April 3–21
 Nagoya, N-1 Studio, *Arakawa Recent Painting and Drawing*,
 May 28–July 28

Tokyo, Kaneko Art Gallery, *Arakawa Print Works*, June 18–July 7
 Ridgefield, The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, *Arakawa*
Recent Drawings, Sept. 23–Dec. 30 Catalogue, with text by
 Arakawa, introduction by Larry Aldrich, and essay by Robert
 Metzger
 —Charles, Eleanor. "Arakawa's Arts " *The New York Times*,
 Sept. 2, 1984, section 11, p. 10, Connecticut edition.
 —Zimmer, William "Show at the Aldrich Explores 'Blankness '"
The New York Times, Oct. 14, 1984, section 11, p. 22,
 Connecticut edition.

1985

New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *Mistakes of Blank (Forming*
Space), April 13–May 11
 —Danto, Arthur C. "Mistakes Of Blank (Forming Space) "
The Nation (New York), May 11, 1985, pp. 570–73
 —Russell, John. "Shusaku Arakawa " *The New York Times*, May 3,
 1985, section C, p. 22
 New York, Arnold Herstand Gallery, *Arakawa*, April 25–June 5
 Brochure, with text by Madeline Gins
 —Cohen, Ronny. "Arakawa " *Artnews* (New York) 84, no. 7
 (Sept. 1985), pp. 132–33
 —Henry, Gerrit "Arakawa at Feldman and Herstand " *Art in*
America (New York) 73, no. 10 (Oct. 1985), pp. 157–58

Milan, Galleria Blu, *Arakawa*, Nov. 26, 1985–March 15, 1986.
 Brochure, with text by Italo Calvino, in Italian. Reprinted in
La Stampa (Turin), Nov. 23, 1985
 —Antolini, Adriano "I bagliori di Arakawa " *Il Giornale* (Milan)
 Dec. 12, 1985
 —"Dipingere la mente " *Viva* (Milan), Dec. 5–11, 1985
 —Falletti, Anna "Arakawa " *D'Arts* (Milan) 27, no. 110
 (Jan. 1986), pp. 86–89
 —Gualdoni, Flaminia. "Italo Calvino presenta Arakawa " *Domenica*
del Corriere (Milan), Feb. 1986
 —Restony, Pierre "Arakawa. Blank, il Colore della Mente " *Domus*
 (Milan), no. 669 (Feb. 1986), pp. 68–69 In English and Italian.
 —Verzura, Donatella "Arakawa 8lu." *Flash Art* (Milan) 14,
 no. 132 (March 1986)
 —"Zen—oder die Geometrie des Denkens " *Cosmopoliten* (Munich)
 (April 1986), pp. 18–19

1986

Tokyo, The Contemporary Art Gallery, *Arakawa: Paintings to Read*,
 March 7–April 16 Catalogue, with essay by Takahiko Okada,
 in Japanese
 Akron, Emily Davis Gallery, University of Akron, *Arakawa Paintings*
and Drawings (1964–1985), March 31–April 22
 —Byrum, John. "Arakawa Koan." *Dialogue* (Columbus, Ohio) 9,
 no. 5 (Sept.–Oct. 1986), p. 41
 —Jones, Michael "Arakawa Paintings and Drawings " *Dialogue*
 (Columbus, Ohio) 9, no. 2 (March–April 1986), pp. 66–67
 Tokyo, Satani Gallery, *Arakawa, Shuza Tokiguchi The Desire of the*
Diagram, June 3–July 12 Catalogue, with essay by Italo Calvino
 and text by Arakawa, in Japanese
 —Nakashima, Yoshiro "Arakawa " *Artforum* (New York) 25, no. 3
 (Nov. 1986), p. 152

1987

Chicago, Van Stratten Gallery, *Arakawa Prints*, Feb. 13–March 15
 New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *Arakawa: The Fiction of Place*,
 March 21–April 18
 —Russell, John "Paintings by Arakawa " *The New York Times*,
 April 10, 1987, section C, p. 26
 Paris, Galerie Yvon Lambert, *Arakawa*, May 23–June 23
 —Dogbert, Anne "Arakawa " *Art Press* (Paris), no. 116
 (July–Aug. 1987), pp. 77–78
 —Hirasawa, Yoshioka. "The Absolute Blank. On the Occasion of
 Arakawa Exhibition in Paris " *Gejutsu-Shincho* (Tokyo), May 26,
 1987 In Japanese

1988

Tokyo, Satani Gallery, *Arakawa Early Works 1961–62 at New York*,
 March 12–April 2 Catalogue, with essay by Toshiharu Ito, in
 Japanese
 Tokyo, The Seibu Museum of Art, *The Mechanism of Meaning*,
 March 12–April 3 Traveled to Tokyo, Seibu Takanawa,
 The Museum of Modern Art, June 11–July 10 Catalogue,
 with essays by Hiroshi Ichikawa, Masashi Miura, and Takahiko
 Okada, in Japanese
 Nagoya, Gallery Takagi, *Arakawa Recent Paintings*, April 19–
 May 14 Catalogue, with essay by Junichi Kudo and text by
 Madeline Gins, in Japanese
 New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *Arakawa Materiality*,
 Oct. 15–Nov. 12
 —Barrao-Garay, Jose Luis "Arakawa " *Goya* (Madrid), no. 207
 (Nov.–Dec. 1988), pp. 165–66
 —Cottingham, Laura "Arakawa Ronald Feldman " *Flash Art*
 (Milan), no. 144 (Jan.–Feb. 1989), p. 122, international edition.
 In English
 —Dexter, Joshua "The 'Conceptual Painter' Arakawa " *Arts*
Magazine (New York) 63, no. 6 (Feb. 1989), p. 103
 —Evans-Clark, Philippe "Arakawa Galerie Ronald Feldman " *Art*
Press (Paris) no. 131 (Dec. 1988), p. 74 In French
 Brussels, Galerie Isy Brachet, *Arakawa*, Nov. 24, 1988–Jan. 7, 1989
 Catalogue, with text by Arakawa and Madeline Gins and essay by
 Pierre Sterckx, in Dutch, English, and French

—Brayer, Marie-Ange. "Ni ceci, ni cela " *Art et Culture* (Brussels),
 Dec. 1988, p. 17
 —Meuris, Jacques "Arakawa-Delpoit L'envers et l'endroit " *La*
Libre Belgique (Brussels), Dec. 16, 1988, p. 18
 —Papelier, Bert "Arakawa " *Kunst en Kultuur* (Brussels), Dec. 1988,
 p. 18
 Kobe, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, *Arakawa Shusaku*
Exhibition, Dec. 8, 1988–March 23, 1989

1989

Williamstown, Massachusetts, Williams College Museum of Art,
Critical Relations, Oct. 14–Nov. 12

1990

Tokyo, Touka Museum of Contemporary Art, *The Exhibition of*
Shusaku Arakawa—To Atsushi Miyakawa, Jan. 20–March 4
 Catalogue, with introduction by Masami Shiraishi, texts by Arakawa
 and Madeline Gins and Atsushi Miyakawa, and essays by Yasuo
 Kobayashi, Miyakawa, Richi Miyake, Kunio Matsu, et al., in English
 and Japanese
 —Silva, Arturo "Tokyo. Arakawa Touka Museum " *Artforum*
 (New York) 28, no. 10 (summer 1990), p. 182
 West Hartford, Joseloff Gallery, Harry Jack Gray Center, University of
 Hartford, *Arakawa, The Process in Question*, April 19–June 1
 Brochure, with essay by Zina Davis
 —Fleischmann, Eric "Arakawa Exhibit A New Way of Thinking "
Community (West Hartford), April 26–27, p. 10
 —Schwendenwien, Jude "Discovering the Concepts of Arakawa "
The Hartford Courant, May 27, 1990, section G, p. 4
 —Schwendenwien, Jude "Arakawa Joseloff Gallery " *Artscribe*
 (London) no. 84 (Nov.–Dec. 1990), p. 87
 —Zimmer, William "Viewers Are Coaxed Up Ramps to Puzzle
 Over Spore Paintings " *The New York Times*, May 27, 1990,
 section 12, p. 30, Connecticut edition
 Berlin, daadgalerie, *Arakawa*, June 30–Aug. 5 Catalogue, with pre-
 face by Hans-Georg Gadamer, text by Madeline Gins, and essay by
 Italo Calvino, in German
 —Schipf, Renée. "Schwebende Spiritualität von Arakawa [sic] " *Der*
Morgenpost (Berlin), July 26, 1990
 —Vogel, Sabine "Nullpunkt Arakawa in der daadgalerie " *Der*
Tagespiegel (Berlin), July 19, 1990
 —Weh, Halger "Bildnerische Lösung absurder Probleme " *Zitty*
 (Berlin), no. 16 (1990), p. 34
 Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, *Complete Prints of Shusaku*
Arakawa, Sept. 1–16
 New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *Building Sensoriums*
 1973–1990, Sept. 15–Oct. 13
 —Danto, Arthur C. "Gins and Arakawa Building Sensoriums " *The*
Nation (New York), Oct. 15, 1990, pp. 429–32
 —Perrella, Stephen "Building Sensoriums 1973–1990 " *Newsline*
(Columbia University Architecture and Planning Newsletter),
 Oct. 1990, p. 8
 —Stein, Judith "Arakawa and Gins at Ronald Feldman " *Art in*
America (New York) 79, no. 2 (Feb. 1991), p. 143–44
 New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *Paintings for Closed Eyes*,
 Oct. 20–Nov. 10
 —Faust, Gretchen "Arakawa " *Arts Magazine* (New York) 65,
 no. 5 (Jan. 1991), p. 97

1991

Tokyo, Satani Gallery, *Arakawa Untitled*, Nov. 1–28 Catalogue,
 with preface by Hans-Georg Gadamer and essay by Yasuo
 Kobayashi, in English and Japanese
 Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art, *Constructing the*
Perceiver—Arakawa Experimental Works, Nov. 1–Dec. 10
 Catalogue, in English and Japanese Traveled to Kyoto, The
 National Museum of Modern Art, Jan. 7–Feb. 5, 1992, and
 Nagoya, Matsuzakaya Art Museum, June 28–July 19, 1992
 —"Belated Homecoming for Arakawa " *The Journal of Art*
 (New York) 4, no. 9 (Nov. 1991), p. 18
 —Hinoto, Tsuyuhiko "Shusaku Arakawa Painter and Sculptor,
 Plying with Destiny " *Asahi Evening News* (Tokyo), Dec. 1, 1991

—Kamohash, Saizo "The Works of Shusaku Arakawa " Tokyo Walker, no. 42 (Nov. 5, 1991), p. B4 In Japanese

1992

Nagoya, Gallery Takagi, *Arakawa Recent Prints*, March 17–April 25
Cologne, Busche Galerie, *Arakawa*, Nov. 13, 1992–Jan. 20, 1993.

1993

Berlin, Busche Galerie, *Arakawa*, June 6–July 28

1994

Tokyo, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, *Arakawa Drawings 1967–74*, June 18–Aug. 21 Catalogue, with essay by Akira Tatehata, in English and Japanese.

1995

Düsseldorf, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, *Arakawa Room*, Feb. 28, 1995–Jun. 21, 1996 Brochure, with essay by Volkmar Essers
—"Shusaku Arakawa, 59, japanischer * Der Spiegel (Homburg), Nov. 20, 1995, p. 303
Berlin, Galerie Busche, *Reversible Destiny Houses*, April 29–June 20

Selected Group Exhibitions

1958

Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Tenth Yomiuri Independents*, March 12–27 Catalogue (Tokyo Yomiuri Shimbun, 1958). In Japanese

1959

Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Eleventh Yomiuri Independents*, February 28–March 15 Catalogue (Tokyo Yomiuri Shimbun, 1959) In Japanese.

1960

Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Twelfth Yomiuri Independents*, March 1–16 Catalogue (Tokyo Yomiuri Shimbun, 1960) In Japanese
Tokyo, Ginza Gallery, *First Neo Dadaism Organizers*, April
Tokyo, Masunobu Yoshimura's studio, *Second Neo Dadaism Organizers*, July
Kanagawa Prefecture, Kanagawa Museum, *First Group Modern Sculpture Exhibition*, Sept
Tokyo, Hibiya Gallery, *Third Neo Dadaism Organizers*, Sept

1961

Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Thirteenth Yomiuri Independents*, March 2–16. Catalogue (Tokyo Yomiuri Shimbun, 1961). In Japanese
Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art, *Adventure in Today's Art of Japan*, April 12–30 Brochure, with essay by Shinichi Segi; in Japanese
Tokyo, Seibu Museum of Art, *Second Group Modern Sculpture Exhibition*, Sept.

1963

New York, Gordon Gallery, *Boxing Match*, Feb. 27–March 24
—Judd, Donald "Boxing Match." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 37, no. 9 (May–June 1963), pp. 109–10
Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, *Gallery Artists*, Dec. 29, 1963–Jan. 3, 1964

1964

Tokyo, Minami Gallery, *Young Seven*, Jan. 30–Feb. 15 Catalogue, with essay by Yoshiaki Tono, in Japanese
Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, *Boxes*, Feb. 2–29
Kyoto, The National Museum of Modern Art, *Contemporary Trends of Japanese Paintings and Sculptures*, April 4–May 10
New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, *Seven New Artists*, May 5–29

—Ashton, Dore. "Art " *Arts and Architecture* (Los Angeles) B1, no. 6 (June 1964), pp. 8–9, 33
Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, *Gallery Artists*, June 1–27

1965

Champaign, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, *Twelfth Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture*, March 7–April 11 Catalogue, with essay by Allen S. Weller
Albuquerque, University Art Museum, The University of New Mexico, *The Pointer and the Photograph*, April 4–May 9 Traveled to Waltham, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Bloomington, Museum of Art, Indiana University, Iowa City, The Art Gallery, The State University of Iowa, New Orleans, Isaac Delgado Museum of Art; and Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara Museum of Art Catalogue, with essay by Van Deren Coke
San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Art, *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, April 29–June 13 Organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York Catalogue, with introduction by William S. Lieberman Traveled to Denver, Denver Art Museum, Oct. 2–Nov. 14, Champaign, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Dec. 12, 1965–Jan. 30, 1966, Omaha, Joslyn Art Museum, Feb. 26–March 20, 1966, Columbus, Ohio, The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, April 7–May 6, 1966, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Oct. 17–Dec. 26, 1966; Baltimore, Baltimore Museum of Art, Jan. 24–March 19, 1967, and Milwaukee, Milwaukee Art Center, April 13–May 14, 1967
—"Avant-Garde in Nippon." *Newsweek* (New York), May 24, 1965
—Genouer, Emily "Japanese Avant-Garde Works Make Delightful Display at Modern Museum " *World Journal Tribune* (New York), Oct. 18, 1966
—"Japanese Art Display Termed 'Beautiful.'" *News Gazette* (Champaign), Jan. 7, 1966
—Kay, Jane H. "Japanese Art with a Modern Slant " *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Nov. 9, 1966, p. 10
Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, *Gallery Artists*, June 8–July 3
Kyoto, The National Museum of Modern Art, *Contemporary Trends of Japanese Paintings and Sculptures*, June 8–July 26
Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art, *Exhibition of Japanese Artists Abroad Europe and America*, Oct. 15–Nov. 28. Catalogue, with introduction by Seisuke Inada and essays by Michiaki Kawakita and Masayoshi Hamma, in English and Japanese
Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, *Gallery Artists*, Dec. 21, 1965–Jan. 15, 1966.

1966
Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Seventh Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan*, May 10–30 Catalogue (Tokyo Mainichi Shimbun, 1966)
Leverkusen, Städtisches Museum Schloss Morsbroich, *Tradition und Gegenwart*, May 13–June 19 Catalogue, with essays by Rolf Wedewer, Friedrich Hammel, Hans Heinz Holz, Hans Mayer, and Georges Schlocker and statements by the artists
Venice, Galleria del Cavallino, *Modern Art of Japan*, June 15–July 15 Catalogue, with essay by Ichiro Naryu, in English and Italian

1967
Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, *DGNY at DGLA*, Feb. 7–March 4
Champaign, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, March 5–April 9, *Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture* Catalogue, with introduction by Allen S. Weller (Urbana University of Illinois Press, 1967)
Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Ninth Annual Tokyo Biennale 1967*, May 10–30 Catalogue, with essay by Yoshiaki Tono, in Japanese Traveled to Kyoto, Kyoto Municipal Art Museum, June 10–30; Takamatsu, Takomatsu Municipal Museum of Art, July 7–31, Kitakyushu, Yahota Museum, Aug. 17–Sept. 10, Sasebo, Sasebo Central Community Center, Sept. 15–Oct. 1, Nagasaki, Nagasaki Prefectural Museum of Art, Oct. 6–22, and Nagoya, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nov. 5–17

New York, Dwan Gallery, *Language to Be Looked at and/or Things to Be Read*, June 3–28

Milan, Galleria Schwarz, *Towards a Cold Poetic Image*, June 13–Sept. 30 Catalogue, with introduction by Artura Schwarz and essays by Gillo Dorfles and Daniel Palazzoli; in English, French, and Italian

Antwerp, Wide White Space, *Group Exhibition*, June 19–30

New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Drawings. Recent Acquisitions*, June 26–Nov. 22 Catalogue, with introduction by William S. Lieberman

Doyton, The Doyton Art Institute, *An International Selection*, Sept. 16–Oct. 15

Antwerp, Wide White Space, *Group Exhibition*, Sept. 22–Oct. 10
Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, *Pictures to Be Read, Poetry to Be Seen*, Oct. 27, 1967–Jan. 7, 1968 Catalogue, with essays by Jan van der Marck

—Wheelock, Nancy "Heard Any Good Paintings Lately?" *Junior League News* (Los Angeles), May 1968, pp. 35–38

Pittsburgh, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, *1967 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, Oct. 27, 1967–Jan. 7, 1968 Catalogue, with introduction by Gustave von Groschwitz

1968

Antwerp, Wide White Space, *Group Exhibition*, Jan. 5–Feb. 7.
Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, "Three Blind Mice." De col-leches Visser, Peeters, Becht, April 6–May 19 Catalogue, with introduction by Jean Leering and A. van de Walle and essays by W. A. L. Beeren, Hubert Peeters, and Pierre Restony, in Dutch and French. Traveled to Ghent, Sint Pietersabdij, June 15–Aug. 15.
Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Eighth Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan*, May 10–30 Catalogue (Tokyo Mainichi Shimbun, 1968), in Japanese
New York, Dwan Gallery, *Language II*, May 25–June 22
Venice, XXXIV Biennale, Central Pavilion, *Linee della ricerca contemporanea. dall'informale alle nuove strutture*. June 22–Oct. 20 Catalogue, with introduction by Gian Alberto Dell'Acquo
Kassel, Galerie on der schönen Aussicht, Museum Fridericianum, Orangerie im Auepark, *Documenta 4*, June 27–Oct. 6. Catalogue, 2 vols., with essays by Arnold Bode, Bazou Brock, Günther Gercken, Max Imdahl, Jean Leering, and Werner Spies
Düsseldorf, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, *Prospect '68*, Sept. 9–29 Brochure
Tokyo, Minami Gallery, Oct. 30–Nov. 5

1969

Helsinki, The Art Museum of Ateneum, *Ars 69 Helsinki. International Exhibition of Contemporary Art*. March 8–April 13 Traveled to Tampere, The Museum of Modern Art, April 20–May 11 Brochure, in English, Finnish, and Swedish
Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art, *Painting and Sculpture Today 1969*, May 4–June 4 Catalogue, with introduction by Richard L. Warrum.
Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Ninth Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan*, May 10–30 Catalogue (Tokyo Mainichi Shimbun, 1969), with essay by Tamon Miki, in Japanese
New York, Dwan Gallery, *Language III*, May 24–June 18
Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art, *Contemporary Art/Dialogue between the East and the West*, June 12–Aug. 17 Catalogue, with introduction by Masayoshi Hamma, in English and Japanese
London, Hayward Gallery, *Pop Art*, July 9–Sept. 3 Catalogue, with introduction by John Russell and Suzi Gablik
Bern, Kunsthalle Bern, *Plane und Projekte als Kunst/Plans and Projects as Art*, Nov. 8–Dec. 7 Catalogue, published in newspaper form, with essays by P. F. Alihaus and Zdenek Felix
Hartford, Widener Gallery, Trinity College, *Preview 1970*, Nov. 9–30
New York, Macy's Herald Square, *Galleria Schwarz at Macy's Herald Square Ninth Floor*, Nov. 24–Dec. 14 Catalogue

1970

New York, Dwan Gallery, *Language IV*, June 2–25
Dayton, The Dayton Art Institute, *Contemporary Art from the Institute's Collections*, June 6–Aug. 31
Lausanne, Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 3. Salon International de Galeries Pilotes, Artists and Discoverers of "Our Time," June 21–Oct. 4. Brochure, in English and French.
London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, *New Multiple Art*, Nov. 19, 1970–Jan. 3, 1971.
New York, Dwan Gallery, *Gallery Artists*, Nov. 28–Dec. 23

1971

Vienna, Galerie nächst St. Stephan, *Situation Concepts*, March 15–April 10. Catalogue, with essays by Ricky Comi and Peter Weiermair.
Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, *Tenth Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan*, May 10–30. Catalogue (Tokyo, Mainichi Shimbun, 1971), with essays by Ichira Horya and Tamon Miki.
Traveled to Kyoto, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, June 12–July 4, Nagaya, Aichi Civic Center, July 13–25, Miyazaki, Miyazaki Prefectural Museum, Aug.; Sasebo, Sasebo Chuo-Kaminkan, Sept. 7–21, and Fukuoka, Fukuoka Prefectural Cultural Center, Sept. 28–Oct. 10.
New York, Dwan Gallery, *Last Exhibition*, June 1–25
Dublin, The Royal Dublin Society, ROSC '71, Oct. 24–Dec. 29. Catalogue, with essays by Pontus Hultén, Werner Schmalenbach, and James Johnson Sweeney

1972

Indianapolis Museum of Art, *Painting and Sculpture Today*, 1972, April 26–June 4. Catalogue, with introduction by Richard L. Warrum.
Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein, *Szene Berlin Mai '72*, May 26–June 18. Catalogue, with essays by Christos M. Joachimides, Gisliind Nabokowski, and Lil Picard. Traveled to London, Gallery House, as *Berlin-Scene 1972*, Oct. 20–Nov. 19

1973

Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Drawings*, March 13–April 15
Hannover, Kestner-Gesellschaft, *Hommage à Picasso*, Nov. 23, 1973–Jan. 13, 1974. Catalogue, with essays by Werner Hofmann and Wieland Schmied, in German.
Bonn, Städtisches Museum, 30 internationale Künstler in Berlin/Gäste des DAAD, Dec. 14–27.

1974

Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Drawings*, April 11–May 9
Woluit, California, Mt. San Antonio College, *Word Works*, April 16–May 9. Catalogue, with text by Peter Clothier.
Düsseldorf, Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, *Japan Tradition und Gegenwart*, May 3–June 9. Catalogue, with essays by Jürgen Harten and Joseph Love.
Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art, *Painting and Sculpture Today*, 1974, May 22–July 14. Traveled to Cincinnati, The Contemporary Art Center and The Taft Museum, Sept. 12–Oct. 26. Catalogue.
Cologne, Kunsthalle-Wallraf-Richartz Museum, *Projekt '74 Kunst bleibt Kunst—Aspekte internationaler Kunst am Anfang der 70er Jahre*, July 6–Sept. 8. Catalogue, with essays by Wolf Herzogenrath, Dieter Ronte, Manfred Schneckeburger, Albert Schug, and Evelyn Weiss.
Bradford, City of Bradford Metropolitan Council, Art Galleries and Museums, Cortwright Hall, *Fourth British International Print Biennale*, July 7–Sept. 29. Catalogue.
Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, *New Accessions USA*, 1974, Aug. 5–Sept. 22. Catalogue.
Humblebaek, Denmark, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, *Japan på Louisiana*, Sept. 7–Nov. 3. Catalogue, published as *Louisiana Revy* (Humblebaek) 15, nos. 1–2 (Sept. 1974), with essays by Knud W. Jensen, Joseph Love, Makoto Ooka, Yoshiaki Tono, et al.
Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Small Paintings Show*, opened Nov. 6

New York, The Brooklyn Museum, *Nineteenth National Print Exhibition*, Nov. 20, 1974–Jan. 5, 1975. Traveled to San Diego, Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, Feb. 15–March 30, 1975. Catalogue, with essay by Jo Miller.

1975

Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Drawings*, March 13–April 15
Milan, Alessandro Costelli, "Mirrors of the Mind," opened June 11
Cagnes-sur-Mer, France, Château-Musée-Haut de Cagne, 7e Festival International de la Peinture, July 5–Sept. 30. Catalogue, with essays by D. G. Clergue, Frank Elgar, and Claude Menard.
Tokyo, The Seibu Museum of Art, *A View of Japanese Contemporary Art*, Sept. 5–14. Catalogue, with introduction by Seiji Tsutsumi and essays by Makoto Ooka and Takahiko Okada; in Japanese.
Bronxville, New York, Sarah Lawrence Gallery, Sarah Lawrence College, *Word Image Number*, Sept. 23–Oct. 19. Catalogue, with essays by Brooks Adams, Dan Carter, Mary Delahay, Mark French, Lester Paul Kane, and Kevin Trevillian.
Pittsburgh, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, *Pittsburgh Corporations Collect Inaugural Exhibition of The Heinz Galleries*, Oct. 25, 1975–Jan. 4, 1976. Catalogue, with introduction by Leon A. Arkus.
Cincinnati, Cincinnati Art Museum, *Twentieth-Century Japanese Printmakers: Ikeda, Arokawa, Nado*, Dec. 6, 1975–Feb. 29, 1976.
—Brown, Ellen. "Japanese Printmakers Caught between Two Worlds." *The Cincinnati Post*, Jan. 3, 1976, p. 6.
—Findsken, Owen. "Creative Artists of Japan." *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Dec. 14, 1975.

1976

Munich, Galerie Art in Progress, *Handgeschriebene Zeichnungen*, April 1–May 12. Catalogue (Munich, Interessensgemeinschaft Galerien Maximilianstrasse, 1976).
Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, *The Golden Door: Artist-Immigrants of America 1876–1976*, May 20–Oct. 20. Catalogue, with introduction by Daniel J. Boorstin and essay by Cynthia Joffe McCabe. Traveled to Philadelphia, The Balch Institute, Oct. 1–Dec. 31, 1977.
Des Moines, Des Moines Art Center, *Possibilities for Collectors*, July 7–Aug. 15.
—Baldwin, Nick. "'Gallery' Exhibit for D.M." *Des Moines Sunday Register*, July 4, 1976, section B, p. 3.
Berlin, Nationalgalerie Berlin, *New York in Europa*, Sept. 4–Nov. 7, and *Amerikanische Druckgrafik aus öffentlichen Sammlungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Sept. 4–Oct. 24. Traveled to Kiel, Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Nov. 11–Dec. 12. Catalogue, published as *Amerikanische Kunst von 1945 bis heute* (Cologne, Dumont, 1976), with essays by Jean-Christophe Ammon, Lucius Grisebach, Heinz Ohff, Hans Sirelow, Rolf Wedewer, et al.
—Blechen, Camilla. "Ist New York noch die Hauptstadt der Kunst?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, Oct. 1, 1976, p. 26.
—Gosko, Rolf. "Pop schützen die Deutschen am meisten." *Kieler Nachrichten*, Nov. 11, 1976, p. 11.
—Monteil, Annemarie. "Kunstinvestition mit Folgen." *National Zeitung* (Basel), Dec. 11, 1976.
Milwaukee, The Milwaukee Art Center, *From Foreign Shares. Three Centuries of Art by Foreign-Born American Masters*, Oct. 15–Nov. 28. Catalogue.
—"From Foreign Shares. Three Centuries of Art by Foreign Born American Masters." *The Milwaukee Area Guide* 7, no. 11 (Nov. 1976), pp. 14–15.
New York, The Brooklyn Museum, *Thirty Years of American Printmaking*, Nov. 20, 1976–Jan. 30, 1977. Catalogue, with essay by Gene Baro.
Antwerp, I.C.C. Antwerp, The Museum of Drawers, *Herbert Distel*, Dec. 12, 1976–Jan. 9, 1977. Catalogue, with essays by Flor Bek, Herbert Distel, and Peter Killer.

1977

Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, Society for Contemporary Art, *Thirty-fifth Exhibition: Drawings of the Seventies*, March 9–May 1. Checklist, with introduction by Harold Joachim.

—Artner, Alon G. "Portraits and Drawings in Pleasing Perspective." *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1977, p. 6.
New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, *Downtown, Words: A Look at the Use of Language in Art 1967–1977*, March 10–April 13. Brochure.
—Wooster, Ann-Sargent. "One and Many Words Exhibition." *The SoHo Weekly News* (New York), March 31, 1977.
Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Painting and Drawing Exhibition*, April 20–May 14.
Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, *Words at Liberty*, May 7–July 3. Catalogue, with essay by Judith Russi Kirshner.
Kassel, Orangerie, Neue Galerie, Museum Fridericianum, *Documenta 6*, June 24–Oct. 2. Catalogue, 3 vols., with essays by Günter Metken, Wieland Schmied, Manfred Schneckeburger, et al.
Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, *A View of a Decade*, Sept. 10–Nov. 10. Catalogue, with introduction by Stephen Prokopyoff and essays by Martin Friedman, Peter Gay, and Robert Pincus-Witten.

1978

Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Three Generations: Studies in College*, Jan. 26–March 4.
Graz, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, *Von Arokawa bis Warhol, Grafik aus den USA, aus der Sammlung Rischner*, Feb. 9–March 5. Catalogue, with essays by Kurt Jungwirth and Wilfried Skreiner.
—Els, Van Ingeborg. "Neues von der Pop-Generation." *Kleine Zeitung* (Graz), Feb. 9, 1978, p. 28.
New York, The Brooklyn Museum, *Graphicstudio, U.S.F. An Experiment in Art and Education*, May 13–July 16. Catalogue, with introduction by Gene Baro and an interview with Donald Soff.
Venice, XXXVIII Biennale, Co' Corner della Regina, *Art and Cinema*, July 2–13. Catalogue, with essay Vittorio Fagnone, in English and Italian.
New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, *Art about Art*, July 19–Sept. 24.
Deauville, Cosino de Deauville, Hall et Galerie Doree. 14–7 artistes américains 7 artistes européens, Sept. 2–10. Catalogue, in English and French.
Cleveland, Ohio, The Cleveland Museum of Art, *Four Contemporary Painters*, Sept. 20–Oct. 29. Catalogue, with introduction by Tom E. Hinsan.

1979

Bochum, Museum Bochum, *Words: Gebrauch der Sprache in der Kunst während des letzten Jahrzehntes*, Jan. 27–March 11. Catalogue, with introduction by Isabella Puliafito, in German and Italian. Traveled to Genoa, Palazzo Ducale, as *Words: L'uso del linguaggio nell'arte dell'ultimo decennio*, March 28–May 4.
Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Summer 1979: An Exhibition of Selected Acquisitions*, Aug. 4–Sept. 15.

1980

New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Printed Art: A View of Two Decades*, Feb. 14–April 1. Catalogue, with essay by Riva Castileman.
—Boroy, Ann. "The Flourishing Art of the Print." *The New York Times*, Feb. 10, 1980, section 2, pp. 29, 31.
Basel, Galerie Beyeler, *Lettres et chiffres/Schrift im Bild*, March–May. Catalogue.
Des Moines, Des Moines Art Center, *Possibilities for Collectors III*, July 15–Sept. 1.
—Baldwin, Nick. "Cultivating Collectors." *Des Moines Register*, July 20, 1980.
—Nusbaum, Eliot. "A Lesson in Objectivity." *Des Moines Tribune*, Aug. 21, 1980, section D, p. 10.
Old Westbury, Amelie A. Wallace Gallery, State University of New York, *Images: Objects Ideas Arakawa Richard Artschwager Sol LeWitt*, Oct. 13–Nov. 6.

Tochigi-ken, Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, *1980 Japanese Prints* Oct 26–Nov 23 Catalogue, with essay by Hirohiko Takeyama, in Japanese

Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, *Artist and Printer*, Dec 7, 1980–Jan 18, 1981 Catalogue, with essay by Graham W. J. Beal

Traveled to Houston, Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery, University of Texas, Feb 22–April 5, 1981

—Crossley, Mimi. "Artist and Printer Six American Print Studios" *The Houston Post*, March 15, 1981, section AA, pp 11, 17

—Tennant, Donna. "Art These Prints Not Paupers Be" *Houston Chronicle*, March 15, 1981

1981

Chicago, Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, *Words as Images*, Feb 4–28

—Burleigh, Robert. "Words as Images" *New Art Examiner* (Chicago) 8, no 7 (April 1981), p 22

New York, Pratt Graphics Center, *American Prints and Printmaking 1956–1981* April 3–May 1 Catalogue, with essays by Judith Goldman, Carol Saft, Amy Sloton, Andrew Stosik, et al.

—Saft, Carol. "The Growth of Print Workshops and Collaborative Printmaking Since 1956" *Print Review* (New York), no. 13, pp. 55

Ridgefield, The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, *New Dimensions in Drawing 1950–1980*, May 2–Sept 6

New York, The Brooklyn Museum, *Twenty-second National Print Exhibition*, Oct 3, 1981–Feb 3, 1982 Catalogue, with introduction by Gene Baro

Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art, *The 1960's A Decade of Change in Contemporary Japanese Art*, Dec 4, 1981–Jan 31, 1982 Catalogue, with essay by Taman Miki; in English and Japanese Traveled to Kyoto, The National Museum of Modern Art, Feb 10, 1982–March 14, 1982

1982

New York, Pratt Graphics Center, *Artist and Printer Printmaking as a Collaborative Process* Traveled to East Hampton, New York, Guild Hall, closed March 21

—Harrison, Helen A. "Breaking Barriers in Printmaking" *The New York Times*, March 14, 1982, section 21, p. 8, Long Island Sound weekly

Southampton, England, Art Gallery, *Big Prints*, April 17–May 23, exhibition organized by the Arts Council of Great Britain. Catalogue, with introduction by Frances Corey Traveled to Edinburgh, Fruitmarket Gallery, May 29–June 26, Dudley, Central Museum and Art Gallery, Aug 21–Sept 25, Aberystwith, Arts Centre, Oct 9–Nov 6, Barnsley, Cooper Gallery, Jan 1–Feb 6, 1983; and Wolverhampton, Art Gallery, Feb. 12–March 19, 1983

1983

New York, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, 1984—A Preview, Jan. 26–March 12. Catalogue, with introduction by Carrie Rickey

Youngstown, The Butler Institute of American Art, *National Midyear Exhibition*—1983, June 26–Aug 28 Catalogue

—Cullinan, Helen. "Arokawa's Work Lets Energy Flow" *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio), Aug 14, 1983

—"Forty-seventh Annual National Midyear Shaw" *Dialogue* (Columbus, Ohio) 5, no 6 (Jul.–Aug 1983), p 33

Des Moines, Des Moines Art Center, *Director's Choice*, Sept 13–Nov 13 Catalogue

New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Twentieth Century Acquisitions*, Sept 15–Nov 30

—Glueck, Grace. "The Met Makes Room for the Twentieth Century" *The New York Times*, Sept 18, 1983, section 2, pp 27, 30

Kyoto, The National Museum of Modern Art, *The Modern American Poster*, Oct 21–Dec 4 Organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York Catalogue (Kyoto The National Museum of Modern Art, New York Museum of Modern Art, 1983), with essay by J. Stewart Johnson; in English and Japanese Traveled to Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art, Dec 14, 1983–Jan 22, 1984

Tokyo, Metropolitan Art Museum, *Trends of Japanese Art in the 1960s*, Oct 22–Dec 18 Catalogue, in English and Japanese

New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Japanese Art in the Guggenheim Museum Collection*, Dec 16, 1983–Feb. 19, 1984

1984

Nice, Villa Arson, *Écritures dans la peinture*, April–June Catalogue, vol. 1, essay by Michel Butor, vol. 2, essays by Jean-Claude Lambert, François Pluchart, et al.

Takasaki, Gunma Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, *Japanese Contemporary Paintings 1960–80*, April 12–May 20 Catalogue, with essay by Ichiro Haryu, in Japanese

1985

Albuquerque, University Art Museum, The University of New Mexico, *Fifty Artists Fifty Printers*, Feb 2–March 24 Catalogue

Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, *Selections from the William J. Hokin Collection*, April 20–June 16 Catalogue

Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, *American Painting and Sculpture Selections from the Permanent Collection*, June 28–Aug 19 Brochure, with essay by Dennis Nawrocki

Tokyo, Metropolitan Art Museum, *Forty Years in Contemporary Art*, Oct 12–Dec 8 Catalogue, in English and Japanese

Oxford, England, Museum of Modern Art, *Reconstructions Avant-Garde Art in Japan 1945–1965*, Dec 8, 1985–Feb 9, 1986 Catalogue, with essays by David Elliott, Ichiro Haru, Kazu Kaido, Fumio Nanjo, et al. Traveled to Edinburgh, Fruitmarket Gallery, Feb 22–April 5, 1986

1986

Tokyo, Laforet Museum Harajuku, *The Frederick R. Weisman Foundation Collection of Art*, March 22–April 6 Traveled to Nagaya, ICA Nagaya, April 12–May 11; Osaka, Nava Museum of Art, May 16–June 11, and Yokohama, Sogo Museum of Art Yokohama, July 15–29 Catalogue, with introduction by Henry T. Hopkins (Tokyo Tsurumoto Room, 1986), in English and Japanese

Dayton, The Dayton Art Institute, *Selection from the Twentieth Century Collections*, May 24–July 13

Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, *Beuys zu Ehren*, July 16–Nov 2 Catalogue, with essays by Johannes Cladders, Laszlo Glozer, Georg Jappe, Armin Zweite, et al. and text by Arokawa

—Nemczek, Alfred. "Die Besten aus vielen Ländern ehren Joseph Beuys." *Art* (Hamburg), no 9 (Oct 1986), p 9

Nuremberg, Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft, *Der Traum vom Raum*, Sept 13–Nov 23 Catalogue, with introduction by Kurt Locher and essays by Gunter Binding, Siegmund Holsten, et al.

Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, *Japon des Avantgardes 1910–1970*, Dec 9, 1986–March 2, 1987 Catalogue, with introduction by Takashina Shuji, et al. and essays by Nakamura Giichi, Jean-Jacques Orsog, Asano Toru, Abe Yoshio, et al.

—Dogen, Philippe. "Les Métamorphoses du modernisme." *Le Monde* (Paris) Dec 11, 1986, p 14

1987

Leverkusen, Städtisches Museum Schloss Morsbroich, *Von Arokawa bis Winzer*, May 27–July 5 Catalogue

1988

Rotterdam, Gran Pavese Foundation, *Gran Pavese The Flag Project* Catalogue (Rotterdam Gran Pavese Foundation, and The Hague SDU), ed. Terèse Legierse and Peter van Beveren, with introduction by Legierse, van Beveren, and Ralph van Hessen and essays by Umberto Barbieri, Peter Frank, and Legierse. In English and Dutch

Cologne, Museum Ludwig, *Morcel Duchamp und die Avantgarde seit 1950*, Jan 15–March 6 Catalogue, with essays by Dieter Daniels, Alain Jouffroy, Robert Lebel, Serge Stauffer, et al. and text by Arokawa and Madeline Gins

New York, Max Protetch Gallery, *Arokawa Alfred Jensen. Sol LeWitt*, June 4–July 15

—Cyphers, Peggy. "At Max Protetch Arts (New York), no 63 (Oct 1988), pp 105–06

New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, *Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza, Modes of Address. Language in Art Since 1960*, July 29–Sept 23 Catalogue, with essays by Tom Hardy, Amy Heard, Ingrid Periz, and Michael Waldron

—Hardy, Tom. "Language in Art since 1960" *Galeries Magazine* (Paris), no. 26 (Aug–Sept 1988), pp 62–63, international edition In English and French.

—Hearney, Eleanor. "Modes of Address" *Artnews* (New York) 87, no. 9 (Nov 1988), p 190.

Shibuya, Japan, Seed Hall, *Toma Vivant '88 Six Wonders of Modern Art. The Model of the World*, Sept 22–Oct 4

Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT List Visual Arts Center, *Clockwork Timepieces by Artists, Architects, and Industrial Designers*, Dec 17, 1988–Feb. 12, 1989 Catalogue, with introduction by Dana Friis-Hansen and Koly Kline and essays by J. T. Fraser, Friis-Hansen, and Kline.

Berlin, Akademie der Künste, *Balken mit Facher*, Dec 18, 1988–Feb 5, 1989 Catalogue, with essays by Rudi Fuchs, Joachim Santorius, and Roland H. Wieggenstein Traveled to Cologne, Du Mont Kunsthalle, May 18–July 2, 1989

—Hoose, Armine. "Eine Schau für unser Jahrhundert des Nachdenkens. Interview mit Rudi Fuchs" *Kolner Stadt-Anzeiger* (Cologne), May 18, 1989, p 20

1989

New York, Griffin McGear Gallery, *Form, Being, Absence*, May 6–June 10. Brochure, with introduction by Stephen Perrella and Alastair Noble and texts by Jeffrey Kipnis, Mark C. Taylor, Madeline Gins, and John Caputo

Brussels, Galerie des Beaux-Arts, *Arokawa/Kudo/Kusama/Shiraga/Tonaka*, Nov 14–Dec 23

1990

Cincinnati, Cincinnati Art Museum, *Innovation and Tradition, Twentieth-Century Japanese Prints*, Jan 19–May 20

Ibaraki, Japan, Tsukuba Museum of Art, *L'Art renouveau de la Ville L'Art Contemporain et Urbanisme en France/Art Renewing the City Contemporary Art and Urbanism in France*, June 9–July 8 Catalogue, with introduction by Hideo Takumi and essays by Monique Foux, Alain Jouffroy, Gilbert Smadja, Hiroyuki Suzuki, et al., in French and Japanese Traveled to Osaka, National Museum of Art, Aug 25–Sept 24, Sendai, Youth Cultural Center, Oct 20–Nov 15, Fukuoka, Fukuoka Art Museum, Nov 29–Dec 16, Sapporo, Sapporo Contemporary Art Museum, Feb 1–March 17, 1991, Yamanashi, Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art, April 6–May 12, 1991, and Yokohama, Business Park, May 25–June 16, 1991

Miyagi, Miyagi Museum of Art, *Art and Vision From Japanese Modern Art*, Oct 2–Nov 4 Catalogue, in Japanese

Ridgefield, The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, *Language in Art*, Oct 20, 1990–Jan 6, 1991 Brochure, with essay by Martha B. Scott

1991

Bay Harbor Islands, Florida, Gloria Luria Gallery, *Twenty-fifth Anniversary Exhibition*, Jan. 25–Feb 16

Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, *Conceptualism—Postconceptualism The 1960s to the 1990s*, Aug 22–Nov 8 Brochure, with essay by John Stauffer and Lynne Warren

Tampa Museum of Art, Florida, *Collaborations in Contemporary Art Graphicstudio U.S.F.*, Sept 14–Dec 1 Brochure, with essay by Donald J. Soff Traveled to Sarasota, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, June 26–Sept. 13, 1992, and Orlando, Orlando Museum of Art, Oct 2–Nov 29, 1992

Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, *Graphicstudio Contemporary Art from the Collaborative Workshop at the University of South Florida*, Sept 15, 1991–Jan 5, 1992 Catalogue, with introduction by Ruth E. Fine and essays by Mory Lee Corlett and Fine

Paris, Galerie Mantoigne, Virginia Dwan, Oct 1–Dec 14 Catalogue, with introduction by Loic Molle and essay by Jon van der Marck

1993

Osaka, The National Museum of Art, *Japanese Anti-Art Now and Then*, Oct 10–Dec 1 Catalogue, with essays by Taman Miki and Keiji Nakamura, in English and Japanese.

Osaka, The National Museum of Art, *Introduction to Twentieth Century Art II: Object and Concept*, March 20–May 23 Brochure, in Japanese

Daytona Beach, The Museum of Arts and Sciences, *Masterprinter Masterpieces Contemporary Prints from Tapaz Edition*, April 18, 1993–Feb 27, 1994

Paddington, Ivan Daugherty Gallery, The University of New South Wales, *Looking at Seeing and Reading*, July 1–31 Brochure, with essay by Ian Burn

Milan, Galleria Blu, *Gli Artisti della Blu, 1957–1993*, opened Oct 11

Fukuoka, Fukuoka Art Museum, *Art in Flux III Neo-Dada Witnessed*, Nov 23, 1993–Feb 6, 1994 Catalogue, with essays by Ishiguro Kenji, Yashimura Masunabu, and Kuroda Raiji.

1994

Saitama, The Museum of Modern Art, *Crass and Square Grids*, Feb 5–March 21 Catalogue, with introduction by Itaru Hirano and essays by Jun Aoki, Takosha Hayami, Hirashi Kashiwagi, Nabura Kawazae, et al., in English and Japanese

Yokohama, Yokohama Museum of Art, *Japanese Art after 1945 Scream Against the Sky*, Feb 5–March 30 Catalogue (Tokyo Yomiuri Shimbun, 1994), with introduction by Alexandra Munroe and essays by Amano Torao, Munroe, Tamah Kashiwagi, and Hitari Fukuda, in English and Japanese Traveled to New York, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, Sept 14, 1994–Jan 8, 1995, and San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in association with the Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena Gardens, May 31–Aug 27, 1995 Catalogue (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), with essays by Alexandra Munroe, Arata Isozaki, Karatani Kojin, John Clark, Berth Winter, Amano Torao, and Nam June Paik

Tokyo, Itabashi Art Museum, *When the Body Becomes Art The Organs and Body as Object*, April 9–May 29 Catalogue, with essays by Lynne Cooke, Iris Gniadsarsch, Masata Ozaki, and Apinan Pashyananda, in English and Japanese

Tokyo, Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts, *Memento Mori*

Visions of Death ca 1500–1994, May 29–July 17 Traveled to

Tochigi-ken, Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, July 31–

Sept 25 Catalogue, with introduction by Reika Kakatsu and essays

by Michiko Sagawa, Hisaka Kaike, and Hirashi Takayama, in

Japanese

1995

Tokyo, Meguro Museum of Art, *Japanese Culture The Fifty Pastwar Years*, April 19–June 4 Catalogue, in Japanese Traveled to Hiroshima, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, June 14–July 21, Kabe, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Aug 15–Sep 24, and Fukuoka, Fukuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, Oct 8–Nov 5

Humblebaek, Denmark, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, *Calas-arven*, June 2–July 23

Los Angeles, Margo Leavin Gallery, *Twenty-five Years An Exhibition of Selected Works*, Sept 23–Oct 28

1996

Tokyo, Museum of Contemporary Art, *1964 A Turning Point in Japanese Art*, Jan 13–March 24 Catalogue, with essays by Reiichi Noguchi and Kunio Yaguchi, in English and Japanese

New Orleans, Contemporary Art Center, *Master Works from the Collaborative Workshop, Graphicsstudia, U S F*, March 3–May 13

Tampa, U S F Contemporary Art Museum, *Symbolized Signifier*, July 8–Aug 24 Brochure, with essay by Yrik-Max Valentanis

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